

In Re City of New York 2022-2023 Districting Commission Bronx  
Second Round Public Hearing  
August 17, 2022

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

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Lehman College  
250 Bedford Park Boulevard  
Bronx, New York 10458

DATE: August 17, 2022  
TIME: 5:34 p.m.

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

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

3 COMMISSIONERS:

4 DENNIS M. WALCOTT, Chair

5 YOVAN SAMUEL COLLADO

6 HON. MARILYN D. GO

7 KEVIN JOHN HANRATTY

8 LISA SORIN

9 MONSIGNOR KEVIN SULLIVAN

10 MAF MISBAH UDDIN

11 MARC WURZEL

12 MARIA MATEO

13 DARRIN PORCHER

14 DR. JOHN FLATEAU

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1  
2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good evening to all  
3 and welcome to our hearing and it's a  
4 pleasure to be here in the Bronx and  
5 just a couple of housekeeping things and  
6 that, FYI, we have a transcriber who is  
7 here, so if you don't see us taking  
8 notes, we'll also, will have  
9 transcription, so it will be available  
10 that we can review. We want people to  
11 be aware of that, we want you to be kind  
12 and respectful, but we also have our  
13 three-minute clock for testimony and so  
14 that way I will prompt you when we are  
15 getting close to three minutes, but at  
16 the same time we understand about the  
17 passion of testifying before the  
18 commission itself, so making sure we're  
19 closing it down for that and also we'll  
20 be interrupting you guys. The last time  
21 we were in the Bronx we had a borough  
22 hearing is the intersecting of in-person  
23 testimony, as well as virtual testimony  
24 as well, so we try to make sure we're  
25 now including those who are testifying

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virtually. With that being said, I

3

would like have our commissioners

4

introduce themselves first and then

5

we'll kick off our public testimony and

6

I'll start to my right.

7

MR. WURZEL: Good evening, everyone,

8

my name is Mark Wurzel. I live on the

9

upper east side of Manhattan, but I

10

spend a lot of time in the boogie-down

11

Bronx, I'm a season ticket holder of the

12

New York Yankees.

13

MS. SORIN: Good evening, everyone,

14

Lisa Sorin, a lifelong resident of the

15

Bronx and the Bronx Chamber of Commerce.

16

MS. PRUNN: Good evening, I'm Madam

17

Commissioner Prunn Grace and I'm general

18

counsel for the commission.

19

MR. PORCHER: Good evening, ladies

20

and gentlemen, I'm Darrin Porcher. I'm

21

a lifelong resident of the Bronx and I'm

22

happy to be here with the commissioners

23

to represent you as a population.

24

MR. UDDIN: Good evening, my name is

25

Maf Misbah Uddin, U-D-D-I-N, and I'm

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representing Queens, thank you.

2

3

MS. GO: Good evening, my name is

4

Marylin Go, I'm a retired (inaudible) in

5

Brooklyn and I live in Brooklyn, but I

6

love coming up to the Bronx and I'm

7

learning a lot about the Bronx.

8

MR. COLLADO: Good evening,

9

everyone, my name is Yovan Collado, I'm

10

from the Bronx as my alma mater good to

11

be home.

12

MR. SULLIVAN: Kevin Sullivan, I was

13

born in the Bronx, I now live in

14

Manhattan.

15

MR. FLATEAU: Good evening, John

16

Flateau, executive director.

17

CHAIR WALCOTT: And virtually we

18

have commissioner as well, commissioner?

19

MS. JOHNSON: Thank you, can you

20

hear me?

21

CHAIR WALCOTT: Now we can.

22

MS. JOHNSON: Sorry, hi everyone,

23

I'm Christine Johnson from Brooklyn,

24

thank you.

25

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

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1  
2 commissioner and as other commissioners  
3 join, we'll have them introduce  
4 themselves, whether in person or  
5 virtually, so I'd like to start our  
6 testimony with our council-member Eric  
7 Dinowitz.

8 MR. DINOWITZ: Good evening -- um,  
9 it's -- it's, good evening  
10 commissioners, guests, I'm  
11 council-member Eric Dinowitz  
12 representing the 11th District here in  
13 the Bronx, that's right, the best  
14 district. In fact, this institution is  
15 in my district and I'm very proud of  
16 that and we're doing a hometown thing  
17 like I took two courses here in college  
18 as well, all right -- um, I'm also the  
19 co-chair of the Bronx delegation and I  
20 first want to thank the commissioners  
21 and the staff for the incredibly  
22 important and challenging task before  
23 you, and the work that has been done so  
24 far. The district lines, though, the  
25 commission draws must take into account

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1  
2 communities and interests, but these  
3 communities are not always reflected in  
4 the neighborhood lines laid out in  
5 census maps. The draft lines are a good  
6 example of that reality, residents of  
7 the Bronx and its selected  
8 representatives live and breathe these  
9 streets these communities -- um, I  
10 spoken extensively with local residents  
11 and seek to encapsulate their needs and  
12 I look forward to the next set of maps  
13 that reflects the voices of Bronxites.  
14 In the commission's maps, for example,  
15 the neighborhood of Wakefield was  
16 completely removed from the 11th  
17 District and added to the 12th district  
18 and part of Kingsbridge Heights was  
19 moved from the 14th and added to the  
20 11th for reasons I will explain. This  
21 is the opposite direction in which the  
22 district needs to be remaped. I urge  
23 the commission -- the commission to  
24 consider changes to their draft maps to  
25 meet the needs of residents of the

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1  
2 Bronx. The first issue is the historic  
3 nature of District 11. The northwest  
4 section of Wakefield has historically  
5 been part of District 11. And  
6 Kingsbridge Heights has historically  
7 been part of District 14. This history  
8 is a reflection of shared interests and  
9 the newly drawn map should include  
10 Wakefield in District 11 and ensure that  
11 Kingsbridge Heights remains united with  
12 District 14, but it's not just history  
13 that dictates the importance of  
14 including Wakefield in 11 and ensuring  
15 Kingsbridge Heights remains in 14.  
16 Beyond the historic nature of the  
17 district, District 11 is currently home  
18 to communities of interest centered on  
19 housing, which is the second issue  
20 pertaining to this map, District 11  
21 contains neighborhoods that in the north  
22 are generally zoned R1 through R5, this  
23 means homes and buildings that are  
24 generally lower in density than other  
25 areas in the Bronx and represent unique



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1  
2 needs as it relates to property taxes,  
3 to parking, cleaning services, DSNY,  
4 public transit and more. And with the  
5 commission's draft residents of  
6 Wakefield who share those same unique  
7 needs as other neighborhoods in District  
8 11, like Kingsbridge, like Riverdale,  
9 like Woodlawn, would be added to a  
10 district that includes a significant  
11 number of residents in larger, large  
12 developments. Conversely, parts of  
13 Kingsbridge Heights that were added to  
14 District 11 should be united with  
15 District 14. In contrast to Wakefield,  
16 Kingsbridge Heights contains zoning  
17 regulations and buildings that are more  
18 similar to those in District 14. To  
19 ensure that communities with similar  
20 housing are united, I urge the  
21 commission to consider these changes.  
22 Beyond the zoning, the third issue deals  
23 with renters and owners. According to  
24 census data, Wakefield has  
25 proportionately more owners of property

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1  
2 than Kingsbridge Heights, which has  
3 proportionally more renters. Renters  
4 and owners each face their own unique  
5 needs and the district lines must  
6 reflect these aligned interests, if the  
7 renters in Kingsbridge Heights are  
8 united with other renters in the 14th  
9 they can mobilize their political power  
10 to fight for their shared interests.  
11 Similarly, owners and shareholders  
12 united in the 11th District can mobilize  
13 their political power to fight for  
14 common needs. The owners in Wakefield  
15 haven't aligned interests with the other  
16 owners in the North Bronx, while the  
17 residents in Kingsbridge Heights have  
18 shared interests with other parts of  
19 Kingsbridge Heights and University  
20 Heights. Now, as a Bronx delegation, we  
21 are working together to construct a  
22 Bronx unity map that reflects the  
23 communities of interest that we all know  
24 and understand at a block by block level  
25 and we will submit this map

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1  
2 electronically, but given the factors I  
3 outlined above, I urge the commission to  
4 retain the 2012 lines for council  
5 District 11 with the following changes.  
6 Based on the communities of interest  
7 that I mentioned before and population  
8 changes in Wakefield, adding blocks  
9 south of east 233rd to east 238 from  
10 Bronx Parkway in the west to Bronxwood  
11 Avenue in the east, adding everything  
12 north of Nereid Avenue at areas west of  
13 Bruner and east of Barnes between Neried  
14 and Pittman, the area whose north border  
15 is Pittman, whose east border is Gunther  
16 Avenue, whose southern border is East  
17 232nd and runs west, connected to the  
18 rest of District 11 and include the  
19 square block between Bronxwood Avenue  
20 and Paulding Avenue and East 233, 232nd  
21 streets. In the area of Kingsbridge  
22 Heights, the area that was added to  
23 District 11 in the first draft of this  
24 map should be reunited with District 14  
25 and in the maps that I will submit

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1  
2 electronically including additional --  
3 uh, square blocks of the Kingsbridge  
4 Heights area to add to districts 14 and  
5 15. Um, I thank you for your  
6 consideration and look forward to the  
7 next round of maps that reflects the  
8 collective will of the residents of the  
9 Bronx.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,  
11 councilmember, for your testimony. Next  
12 we have councilmember Amanda Faias. And  
13 we're working on the feedbacks, I know  
14 we're getting feedback here, but it's  
15 being worked on, hopefully we'll have it  
16 resolved soon, sorry for the thumbs  
17 down, but it's just unfortunately the  
18 technology and the reality, so I'm not  
19 sure how we address it, but we're  
20 looking at it okay, thank you.  
21 Councilmember?

22 MS. FARIAS: Can you hear me?

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes.

24 MS. FARIAS: Okay, great. My name  
25 is --

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CHAIR WALCOTT: Councilmember, can you hold on one second, we're having technical difficulties down here.

MS. FARIAS: Sure.

CHAIR WALCOTT: That check sounded better, hold on a second, can you say a couple of words?

MS. FARIAS: Hello everybody --

CHAIR WALCOTT: There we go, all right, thank you councilmember.

MS. FARIAS: Yeah, I can hear myself now. Okay, great. I'm councilmember Amanda Farias, representing the 18 district of the New York City Council and I'll be submitting additional testimony in the coming weeks to support the current neighborhoods and communities of council District 18, but tonight, I did want to address the first drafted map. Council District 18 was in a large portion of the Soundview community that is directly affected of the surrounding neighborhood areas. We'll takes on an area that encompasses

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1  
2 New York Studios, which can be an  
3 opportunity an economic driver for  
4 residents, this area also brings large  
5 (inaudible) that are privately owned,  
6 co-ops that have actually never been  
7 within this districts before -- um, the  
8 new drafted district lines also move  
9 toward -- uh the District 18 toward a  
10 completely new community Westchester  
11 Square. This would increase a big  
12 foot-print and homeowner footprint in  
13 the district, it does feel like a  
14 natural fit for the adjacent communities  
15 like Parkchester, Castle Hill and Zerega  
16 to have Westchester Square included  
17 within our district lines. The two  
18 neighborhoods that are newly included in  
19 council District 18 lines are similar,  
20 if not likened to the current  
21 neighborhoods that I represent. The  
22 Soundview/Bronx River portion that is  
23 currently drafted to be removed does  
24 bring me a bit hesitancy in caution as  
25 residents here historically have been

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1  
2 accustomed to being represented -- uh,  
3 within council District 18 lines, though  
4 many of us are new members and so maybe  
5 that tradition would be so difficult for  
6 our residents. Preliminarily these  
7 draft lines are okay and we'll say to  
8 the commission, but community input is  
9 desperately needed to continue and add  
10 additional members and voices to this  
11 process. I hope the commission has more  
12 hearings, more single drafted maps and  
13 works to utilize tools, like polling,  
14 texting, advertisements and social media  
15 to increase both positive feedback on  
16 the drafted lines and critical feedback  
17 to address the drafted lines, especially  
18 since we are impacting so many  
19 residencies and our neighborhoods.  
20 Lastly, I do want to reaffirm that the  
21 newly directed lines of council District  
22 18 continue to keep Parkchester whole  
23 and (inaudible) community whole, from  
24 the Parkchester community to the  
25 residents of Castle Point every,

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1  
2 constituent and the proposed lands for  
3 council District 18 are connected by  
4 culture and politics. It is crucial we  
5 do not fragment communities that have  
6 already had a long history of  
7 underrepresentation and underfunding.  
8 District 18 is a black and brown  
9 community, but in recent years a large  
10 increase in Asian immigrants to  
11 Parkchester reflected in the 2020 census  
12 data our black and Latinx neighbors have  
13 been able to build generational wealth  
14 and opportunity by building a life in  
15 Parkchester and the Bengali Bangladeshi  
16 community has created a cultural hub on  
17 Starling Avenue directly connected to  
18 the Parkchester, Castle Hill borders,  
19 Parkchester is a privately -- uh,  
20 largest privately owned affordable  
21 housing property in the country and with  
22 more than 40,000 inhabitants in the  
23 Parkchester complex, it's critical that  
24 we keep this entire complex together as  
25 residents share similar demographics and



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1  
2 quality of life issues (inaudible) and  
3 point, Brighten Park and Soundview are  
4 all waterfront communities and in recent  
5 years have seen increased resiliency  
6 efforts and new transit infrastructure  
7 including a new ferry landing and will  
8 continue to need additional support when  
9 it comes to protecting our coastline,  
10 these communities have a long history of  
11 interconnectivity that has afforded the  
12 larger Latinx and brown community  
13 members the opportunity to continue on  
14 generational wealth. It is important  
15 because of this history that these  
16 communities deserve to be kept together  
17 under the same representation. I'm  
18 proud to not only represent such a  
19 community-centric district, but also to  
20 be a product of the culturally rich and  
21 unique communities that make up the past  
22 and currently redrawn council District  
23 18 lines. Thank you to the New York  
24 City Districting Commission for  
25 convening us all here today and to

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1  
2 everyone testifying today for listening  
3 to one another and advocating for your  
4 communities. If we don't defend our  
5 lines now and stand up for what needs to  
6 be kept together or what needs to be  
7 challenged a bit to move forward, it's  
8 our communities and the other boroughs  
9 who are going to deal with the decades  
10 of divestment until it goes. Council  
11 District 18 does not have too many  
12 drastic changes, but that doesn't mean  
13 we can take a back seat in standing up  
14 for our communities to rely on them  
15 every day. So I hope to encourage more  
16 people to submit both public testimony  
17 today in the next couple of days in your  
18 efforts, but also get your neighbors to  
19 submit testimony online. All of that  
20 will be considered in this process,  
21 thank you.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,  
23 councilmember, councilmember Kevin  
24 Riley.

25 MR. RILEY: Greetings and good

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1  
2 evening to the esteemed colleagues of  
3 the districting commission, my residents  
4 of the District 12 and every resident  
5 here in the Bronx, I thank you. I come  
6 before you today as Kevin Riley, the  
7 councilmember, but before I was Kevin  
8 Riley the councilmember, I was a young  
9 born, a young boy born to Jamaican  
10 immigrants who migrated to the 12th  
11 district in hopes to create a better  
12 life and legacy for the future of our  
13 family. As a product of this community  
14 it has been an honor to serve and  
15 represent this district; this district  
16 has made me the person I am today and  
17 this would not be possible without the  
18 foundations, pillars and resources that  
19 have been built in our community. It is  
20 the reason why I have dedicated both my  
21 personal and professional life to this  
22 district. It is the reason why I have  
23 sought out -- sought out to further my  
24 roots, stay in the Bronx and raise my  
25 family here. To give a snapshot of my

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1  
2 life, I was born in the Olinville  
3 section of the Bronx of my district in  
4 the late 80s in the early 90s -- 1990,  
5 my mother purchased a house in the area  
6 that we call the Valley within my  
7 community, while my father's family laid  
8 their roots in Co-Op City. Like many  
9 families here my parents wanted to  
10 invest in our future and create  
11 generational wealth. For a Jamaican  
12 immigrant coming to America, meant a  
13 place of opportunity and the northeast  
14 Bronx was and still is my home and the  
15 largest area of Jamaican diaspora in  
16 City of New York. My schooling started  
17 at Immaculate Conception on Gun Hill  
18 Road, which is also in the Olinville  
19 section of my district, where I attended  
20 until I was in seventh grade and in  
21 eighth grade moved over to Our Lady of  
22 Grace School, which is in the Edenwald  
23 section of our community. Last year as  
24 I spoke about the Valley we were able to  
25 allocate \$43 million to upgrade a park,

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1  
2 a haven park within my community, which  
3 was a huge win as a newly elected  
4 councilmember. My family worked  
5 extremely hard and with abundance of  
6 studying and dedication and my mother  
7 who did not play, because she came from  
8 Jamaica, I was able to study in high  
9 school in Mount St. Michael, which is in  
10 the Wakefield section of our district,  
11 my first job in high school was as a  
12 part-time worker in the New York City --  
13 for the New York City summer youth  
14 employment program at the New York City  
15 public library, which is located in the  
16 Eastchester part of my district, do you  
17 see where I'm going there? Like many  
18 members of this community whose stories  
19 are similar to mine, this neighborhood  
20 in its essence is much greater than the  
21 map, greater than just numbers, it is  
22 our present, our past, our present and  
23 our future critical investment of time,  
24 labor and the fight for resources have  
25 uplifted our neighborhoods to the home

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1  
2 it is today, the monument, the monument  
3 -- the monumental built from our  
4 collaborative actions fuels the  
5 continued charge to advocate for the  
6 betterment of this district. I urge you  
7 to reconsider the boundary lines and  
8 seek feasible alternatives to restore  
9 the fragment of the neighborhoods in Gun  
10 Hill and the Valley, which were taken  
11 away from our district in the  
12 preliminary maps that were presented,  
13 approximately 47 percent of the cases  
14 from my office have been seen from the  
15 zip codes 10467 and 10469, which covers  
16 the East Gun Hill Road area and the  
17 Valley section of our community. This  
18 is a great necessity for in-person  
19 services and to make them accessible.  
20 This impact is seen most greatly by the  
21 loss of the Gun Hill Houses and value  
22 development that has a senior population  
23 with limited access to car ownership,  
24 who will go from a bus ride up under 10  
25 minutes to a multi-phase ride averaging

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1  
2 a half an hour, the 12 council district  
3 is unique by population, is stabilized  
4 as a majority African American community  
5 based on the 2020 census, the  
6 neighborhood, tabulation area the MTA  
7 for Williamsbridge, Olinville has 60  
8 percent black residency and in  
9 Eastchester, Edenwald, Baychester, which  
10 surrounds the communities as the Valley,  
11 has 68 percent compared to the entire  
12 borough, which has 28 percent. In 2019  
13 the census American community survey has  
14 estimated the region of home ownership,  
15 which is, in my district rate of 39.1  
16 percent with 60.2 percent of homeowners  
17 identifying as black in a system where  
18 historically black home ownership has  
19 been difficult to obtain, neighborhoods  
20 like the Valley, Wakefield and  
21 especially Edenwald prevailed as a  
22 pocket of promise within our community  
23 in obtaining the American dream. The  
24 Bronx NHS provides services to expand  
25 home ownership, whether you're a first

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1  
2 time homeowner buyer or foreclosed  
3 within our community and since taking  
4 office we were able to allocate 370k  
5 annually for the last two fiscal years,  
6 providing sustaining funding post  
7 pandemic. This funding is directly  
8 supporting the homeowners of the council  
9 District 12 with the resources  
10 supporting the homeowners of the Valley,  
11 Edenwald and Wakefield, especially in  
12 the context of ensuring resilience with  
13 a fiscal crisis amongst us, furthermore  
14 --

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you wrap it up a  
16 little bit, please?

17 MR. RILEY: I'm trying my best.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay, I appreciate  
19 it, I appreciate that, sir.

20 MR. RILEY: Furthermore, as it  
21 stands there's a number of community  
22 institutions, such as mind builders,  
23 creative arts incorporated, which is  
24 located in Olinville, which is by East  
25 Gun Hill Road that we were able to loc--



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1  
2 advocate 250k and also the Evander  
3 campus, where we were able to advocate  
4 778k. In conclusion, I hope not only my  
5 personal experience resonates, but  
6 exemplifies how unified our community is  
7 and how we are able to accomplish  
8 remarkable growth with our resources in  
9 our district, the past and present  
10 experience and true cultivation of  
11 homeownership and resources will be  
12 taken away to support other council  
13 districts, it is essential to be mindful  
14 of the council dollars that support the  
15 needs of the community. I encourage the  
16 district commission to keep District 12  
17 true to historic context. Breaking up  
18 District 12 will not only dissolve the  
19 vote and power of one of the most  
20 marginalized communities in the city, it  
21 will also be detrimental to the progress  
22 and opportunity of generational wealth  
23 and creating a long-lasting change for  
24 our community. I have so much more to  
25 say, but I'm going to wrap it up.

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CHAIR WALCOTT: I appreciate it.

MR. Riley: Thank you so much.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much, appreciated, thank you for your testimony. Councilmember Althea Stevens.

MS. STEVENS: Good afternoon or good evening. As a duly elected city councilmember of the district, I would like to say the following. First of all, I want to recognize the work that has gone into drafting the new council lines. This is undeniably a difficult task and it's appropriate in the care and consideration the redistricting commission has put into this process. However, given the historical disenfranchisement of my community and the community I'm privileged to represent, I believe it is my responsibility to write and express my concerns of relying on some of the feedback that I've been given by my constituents of District 16. I would

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1  
2 like to first start off by taking the  
3 time to talk about things that you added  
4 to the district -- that the commission  
5 has added to the district that I believe  
6 is a great improvement, like uniting  
7 161st Street BID into one council  
8 district. This is essential as the --  
9 as this additions to the district, I  
10 have been working very closely with the  
11 new BID director to bring opportunities  
12 to local businesses and owners,  
13 increasing the engagement in local  
14 residents. I would like to also say the  
15 adding the additional Drift Keymore  
16 (phonetic) and Fortegal Park to the  
17 district will strengthen the work that  
18 I've been doing with the four parks,  
19 which is an organization that helps  
20 community members volunteer to keep the  
21 upkeep of the park, as most of the group  
22 volunteers in the district live in  
23 District 16, I was proud to be able to  
24 allocate them their first councilmanic  
25 funds, so they can continue to do their

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1  
2 work, but moving on to some of the more  
3 difficult things, like many other  
4 predominantly black and brown areas of  
5 the city District 16 includes disengaged  
6 communities, communities that have  
7 historically been left out of the  
8 decision-making process and we do not  
9 feel motivated to be engaged now.  
10 According to the American community --  
11 um, survey approximately 32 to 40  
12 percent of the district residents live  
13 under the federal poverty line, with one  
14 of the most -- with one of the most  
15 highest shelters rates of children and  
16 shelters and populations in the city.  
17 Although this makes the job of the  
18 redistricting commission more  
19 complicated, it is important to consider  
20 and weigh those unheard voices in this  
21 process, just because someone is away or  
22 unaware of how to engage in this process  
23 does not mean they should be ignored.  
24 I'm here today to implore the commission  
25 to pay attention to such communities

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1  
2 that have been left out of this  
3 conversation, engaging those communities  
4 uplifting and unheard voices has been a  
5 priority of my office and I've just  
6 stated making it inroad -- I just  
7 started being inroads. I partnered  
8 closely with my community board to build  
9 up leaders and demonstrate to residents  
10 that they have access to the elected  
11 offices. Dividing those communities  
12 will erase their progress and further  
13 disenfranchise residents from getting  
14 involved. In addition to the work I've  
15 been doing with uniting strengthening  
16 communities, I have particular focus on  
17 youth, working closely with principals  
18 to meet their needs. I have a  
19 particular partnership with principal of  
20 IS229 at 275 Harlem River Drive, Harlem  
21 Park Bridge with the collaboration  
22 focused on local gun violence. I ask  
23 the commission to consider keeping this  
24 school in my district so we can continue  
25 to build on the work and develop

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30

1  
2 alternate pathways for our young people.  
3 There's entities in that community that  
4 merit consideration despite having no  
5 voices at all. The waterfront of the  
6 Bronx -- of the west Bronx is one of --  
7 that is not most uninvested and  
8 unutilized stretch of waterfront in New  
9 York City. Much of the structure along  
10 the Harlem River Drive is a dumping  
11 ground and virtually inaccessible and an  
12 issue I've been working with local  
13 advocates even before I was in office.  
14 To keep this momentum going, it is vital  
15 that I remain the consistent  
16 representation of this current stretch  
17 of waterfront that falls in District 16.  
18 Maintaining it is even more, expanding  
19 and unifying the west Bronx waterfront  
20 would allow a growing coalition of  
21 current base hybrids to coordinate  
22 closely with the council members office  
23 to fight for equity resources and  
24 recognition, additionally dividing the  
25 west Bronx waterfront and separating the

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1  
2 hybrid section from Roberto Clemente  
3 puts that into jeopardy for -- um,  
4 jeopardy with growing coalitions. The  
5 largest concern I have after reviewing  
6 the preliminary wraps -- the maps  
7 concerns the preservation of the black  
8 community, I have consistently heard  
9 growing from black community leaders  
10 that their voices will be diluted and  
11 the beautiful diversity of the Bronx  
12 will not be adequately reflected into  
13 the future. As this was implemented for  
14 the creation of the Voting Act of 1965,  
15 this is a grave concern for me.  
16 Comparing the current maps of council  
17 District 16 to the preliminary plans  
18 released on July 15th, the portions of  
19 the black population decreased from 46  
20 to 36 percent, some of this changed as a  
21 result of the removal of two  
22 historically prominent African American  
23 communities from District 16 map. The  
24 areas include Woodstock Terrace and  
25 Forest Houses and between Trinity and

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1  
2 Tentin and those areas include Cedric  
3 Avenue and Undercliff Avenue and River  
4 Park Towers as those areas the  
5 African-American population of the Bronx  
6 has been a long-standing presence and a  
7 long history of active -- active  
8 community leaders, it is imperative to  
9 keep those communities together as it is  
10 currently representative of the  
11 district. I implore the commission to  
12 consider reinstating council District 16  
13 to include those neighborhoods and  
14 preserve the unification of those  
15 communities. I appreciate the  
16 opportunity to share my testimony and  
17 feedback on the preliminary maps as has  
18 been shared with me, I urge the  
19 commission to take the above issues and  
20 concerns into consideration as we revise  
21 the preliminary maps, thank you.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,  
23 councilmember, one second -- uh, thank  
24 you first and what school did you say,  
25 IS --



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MS. STEVENS: IS229.

CHAIR WALCOTT: IS229, okay, thank  
you very much, thank you.

MS. STEVENS: And I'll be submitting  
a testimony in writing as well in  
addition to the Bronx, we'll be  
submitting a unified statement and map  
to talk about it because the delegation  
has been working hard on that as well.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much  
for your testimony. Next we have former  
councilmember Andy King, virtually.

MR. KING: Are you here? Can you  
here me, see me?

CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, sir, yes we  
can.

MR. KING: Good afternoon, good  
evening everybody, I want to thank you  
Chair Walcott and your whole team there,  
who's done so much to put this map  
together, I know it's been challenging  
for all that you have to do so -- um, as  
a resident of the 12th district -- um,  
who served this in the council, I got to

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1  
2           thank councilman Riley for his earlier  
3           message about how we stick together and  
4           stay together as a neighborhood. I am  
5           too one who's been in this community  
6           pretty much all my life and I think that  
7           as this map has been thrown at us, we're  
8           all asking that it just remains the same  
9           and if there has to be any adjustments,  
10          those adjustments are so minimal that it  
11          doesn't break up the historic value of  
12          our community. Many people who have  
13          embraced and enjoyed and are graduates  
14          of uh -- Evander Childs High School me  
15          as one uh -- public high school PS41,  
16          Magenta Park, which is a historic park  
17          in our neighborhood as well as Gun Hill  
18          Houses -- um which is part of the fabric  
19          of our neighborhood and I know that our  
20          community has been listed as one of the  
21          top residential home in the district in  
22          the City of New York and it'd be a  
23          disservice to break up that power. When  
24          I'm talking about power, I'm talking  
25          about voting power, we know homeowners

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1  
2 bring a different energy of different --  
3 uh, as well as our renters and our  
4 apartments, (inaudible) we're going to  
5 need to make up the 12 district a great  
6 district, so we would hate to lose part  
7 of the value, which is a very historic  
8 part for many who have enjoyed parties,  
9 dances, just a great place to take your  
10 families out to, but we communicate with  
11 each other as family and it'd be  
12 disturbing to say, because numbers might  
13 have changed, that the lines are being  
14 drawn that will break us up as one. So  
15 we're asking this commission to  
16 re-evaluate, reassess what the plans are  
17 in regards to the 12th district, they  
18 did this to our 16th congressional  
19 district, we know that this  
20 neighborhood, the 12th district, has led  
21 to voting in the borough of the Bronx  
22 the last 10 elections because of the  
23 homeowner and the black vote, when they  
24 get to Congress, our 16th District, they  
25 broke it up into three districts and

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1  
2 took out the first black congress member  
3 ever, ever to represent this  
4 neighborhood. So we just broke that up  
5 for no particular reason why couldn't we  
6 continue remaining representing us, so  
7 to do that for the same district of the  
8 12th District where we're taking our  
9 homeowners and we extend the lines up  
10 further north that we're looking at --  
11 um, more shelters, more factories,  
12 commercial strips that take away voting  
13 power, it doesn't bring anything better  
14 to the 12th District and I know no  
15 matter what your color or your view is,  
16 blacks can represent Hispanics,  
17 Hispanics can represent Asians, whites  
18 have represented the 12th District in  
19 the history of this community, so now it  
20 doesn't mean because we may have any  
21 more additional Asians or Hispanics  
22 coming into our -- into the 12th  
23 District, that the lines will change or  
24 we should take our pieces that are  
25 historically part of it to make sure

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1  
2 that 13th city council district or the  
3 15th council district who are looking  
4 for more home ownership or looking, I'm  
5 saying because -- uh because of the  
6 ethnicity, might be changing a little  
7 bit, that we should draw these lines  
8 that create a -- I say a breakup of  
9 historic value of our neighborhood. So  
10 Chair Walcott and to all, everyone who  
11 is in the room today, we're asking for  
12 your love, we're asking for your  
13 compassion, we thank you for the work  
14 that you've done, but we're asking that  
15 the 12th District remains the same with  
16 little adjustments possible and  
17 necessary because we've earned it, we're  
18 worthy of it and we value it until all  
19 our young people going to the middle  
20 schools and high schools, they're  
21 looking to continue to have friendships  
22 in those same schools and those same  
23 buildings and not being able to be  
24 separated by a line that the  
25 conversation might be done differently

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1  
2 because the elected officials look  
3 differently and there's a different  
4 message in those -- coming out of those  
5 districts. So we're praying that we  
6 keep our district strong, we're praying  
7 that we keep it black strong, we're  
8 trying to keep it homeowner strong and  
9 keeping it voter strong, my only point  
10 is keeping it strong with the residents  
11 of the 12th District and if there is a  
12 way that we can keep the map the way the  
13 previous map was, with very few changes  
14 and keeping Gun Hill houses in and  
15 Evander Childs and the football field in  
16 and out PS41 and our Magenta park and  
17 our Immaculate Conception and our Valley  
18 parks. To split the Valley up into half  
19 of our homeowners, it makes no sense, I  
20 know many of you (inaudible) but we need  
21 us to stick together and ask us and  
22 we're asking you all to respect the  
23 words that are coming from us to keep  
24 the 12th District whole. I thank you  
25 for your time this evening, may the Lord

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1  
2 continue to watch over each and every  
3 one of you because it's a tough task  
4 that the commissioners have to do by  
5 responding to all these changes and  
6 we're asking that our change doesn't get  
7 change in the (inaudible), but it  
8 becomes the message of us being to be  
9 able to move forward and stick together  
10 and stay together as the 12th District.  
11 Thank you again for everyone for today  
12 and thank you for your time.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much  
14 for your testimony today. We'll stay in  
15 person for now and so the next three  
16 individuals here are Beatriz Coronel,  
17 Bernadette Ferrara and Essence Scott, so  
18 if you can line up at the microphone,  
19 starting with Beatriz, is it Coronel,  
20 thank you very much.

21 MS. CORONELL: Hi, all, thank you  
22 for having me in my glasses, so I'm  
23 Beatriz Coronel, I am a resident of  
24 council District 12. Thank you  
25 councilmember Riley, I echo everything he

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said, former councilmember Andy Cohen, I am also the chair of Bronx community board 12, but I am here representing myself as a resident, can you hear me.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Your mic might have to be -- I can hear you but --

MS. CORONELL: Then okay, so I'm Beatriz Coronel, resident of council District 12. Um and I'm also chair of community board 12, but I'm here representing myself as a resident speaking -- uh, every opinion is my own -- um, so to the members of the districting commission thank you for having us here. As I said, my name is Beatriz Coronel and today I'm here to testify as a resident of this district. I would like to emphasize that council District 12 is an organically dense black home ownership population. I'm a homeowner with my daughter as well within this district and the preservation of this district's representation matters. My background



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1  
2 is also mental health, so I do  
3 understand that the fabric of the  
4 community is really important. After  
5 the pandemic there was a lot of issues  
6 that arose within our district and we're  
7 working really hard to surpass that and  
8 so continuing to keep a unified  
9 communities above most importance. I  
10 have lived in this neighborhood of the  
11 Bronx for the past five years and I'm  
12 requesting that you reconsider the  
13 boundary lines to help keep my community  
14 unified and intact. Our community and  
15 council District 12 has shared values  
16 and needs and as such, there should be  
17 shared access to the services. Dividing  
18 the district along these borders will  
19 require a further distance to municipal  
20 government services and in most  
21 instances, double the travel time,  
22 particularly via public transportation  
23 to access such services. I would like  
24 to note that in a survey taken amongst  
25 the people of this district, 60 of the

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1  
2 samples shared that they had to travel  
3 outside of their district for services.  
4 Redistricting would increase this  
5 percentage, which would put us at a  
6 great disadvantage. The 12th -- uh  
7 council district, as it stands, is a  
8 close-knit community with shared values.  
9 This district also holds a unique  
10 population as a majority black community  
11 with a higher average of home ownership.  
12 As I previously mentioned. The  
13 neighborhood tabulation area for  
14 Williamsbridge, Olinville has 60 percent  
15 black residency and Eastchester,  
16 Edenwald, Baychester has 68 percent  
17 black residency, compared to the  
18 borough, which has 28 percent black  
19 residency in 2019 via the census  
20 American community survey. It is  
21 estimated that the region has a home  
22 ownership rate of 39.1 percent with 60.2  
23 percent of homeowners identifying as  
24 black compared to the borough, which has  
25 18.9 home percent home ownership with 29

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1  
2 percent of homeowners identifying as  
3 black. To divide this community would  
4 negatively impact us and disenfranchise  
5 the community and weaken political  
6 power. As a result, I, Beatriz Coronel,  
7 I'm compelled to testify to the  
8 commission and ask that they reconsider  
9 these district lines and reconsolidate  
10 Gun Hill and the Valley. Generations of  
11 families have grown up together in this  
12 community and I would like to continue  
13 to build with my neighbors as a  
14 consolidated entity for decades. The  
15 members of this district have built  
16 meaningful relationships by attending  
17 the same schools, faith institutions,  
18 senior centers and now finding ourselves  
19 and subsequently our resources immensely  
20 divided, again we're put at a  
21 disadvantage, we have spent decades  
22 fighting for adequate funding for our  
23 community and especially our schools,  
24 such as Evander and alongside our  
25 council representation, we were able to

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1  
2 secure \$778,000 for capital improvements  
3 for Evander High School campus. This  
4 school is a district -- this school is a  
5 District 12 community institution with  
6 generations of residents in this  
7 community attending this school and a  
8 beacon program where we can send our  
9 kids. Again, taking this out of that  
10 district will leave a lot of our kids  
11 without the option to attend this high  
12 school. These programs require adequate  
13 funding and the neighborhood council  
14 districts already have existing  
15 commitments and institutions such as the  
16 Columbus campus in District 13 and the  
17 Roseville campus in District 15 and it  
18 may take away resources from other  
19 districts to ask them to carry this  
20 charge. In conclusion, as a  
21 long-standing resident and member of  
22 council District 12, I implore the  
23 commission to keep our families  
24 together, our limited resources intact  
25 and restore the original district

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1  
2 boundary lines. With today's climate,  
3 where we are forced to compete for  
4 resources, it is imperative that we keep  
5 our council District 12 community  
6 intact, our goal is to continue to grow  
7 our resources and elevate the quality of  
8 life for those within this district,  
9 thank you for your time.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
11 your testimony. Is Bernadette, is it  
12 Ferrara and then after Bernadette we  
13 have Essence Scott.

14 MS. FERRARA: Yep, okay, okay, good  
15 evening, good evening it's a pleasure to  
16 be here tonight -- uh, my name is  
17 Bernadette Ferrara, born, raised,  
18 educated, raised my family and still  
19 living in the Van Nest section of the  
20 Bronx, a diverse community in the east  
21 part of the Bronx, I've served on  
22 community board 11 -- I serve on  
23 community board 11 and represent Van  
24 Nest since 2008 and I'm a founding  
25 member and current president of the Van

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1  
2 Nest neighborhood alliance of 501c3  
3 formed in 2010. Today I speak, again as  
4 the lifelong resident, I want to  
5 personally thank the commission for  
6 taking to heart both of my testimonies  
7 along with others from Van Nest now  
8 uniting the whole community of Van Nest  
9 into one city council district under the  
10 current proposed map for city council  
11 District 13. The proposed lines include  
12 all of Van Nest aligning us with the  
13 fabric of low-density community issues  
14 present in community board 11 and the  
15 49th Precinct are both located in city  
16 council District 13, with the Van Nest  
17 neighborhood united as one, we will be  
18 better partners with neighboring  
19 communities as a stronger united front  
20 for common community problems, events  
21 and major goals. Uniting Van Nest has  
22 also aided in connecting the large --  
23 the larger Yemeni population in Van  
24 Nest. We are no longer a tale of a  
25 split community sitting on the fringe of

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1  
2 two city council districts. We hope the  
3 current proposed lines for a city  
4 council District 13, which keep Van Nest  
5 as a whole within its borders, moves  
6 forward to be the final lines. Van Nest  
7 looks forward to achieving their major  
8 community goals that have been needed  
9 for decades, that being a boys and girls  
10 club or community center, middle  
11 schools, youth programs, senior  
12 programs, senior housing and veterans  
13 housing. I truly appreciate and commend  
14 the commission for holding this public  
15 hearing to receive additional community  
16 input for the new New York City council  
17 district lines, thank you very much.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
19 your testimony. Essence Scott, Essence  
20 Scott? Okay, we'll come back, we'll do  
21 one more in person and then we'll switch  
22 to virtual testimony, uh is Judith  
23 Benitez here?

24 MS. BENITEZ: Yes, good evening to  
25 everyone, my name is --

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1  
2 CHAIR WALCOTT: If you can speak  
3 directly.

4 MS. BENITEZ: I am.

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: You are, okay.

6 MS. BENITEZ: I am.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: There you go, all  
8 right, closer, okay that's good.

9 MS. BENITEZ: Thank you -- um my  
10 name is Judith Benitez and I live here  
11 in the Bronx for at least, the northeast  
12 Bronx for the last 52 years. I am a  
13 current member of community board 12.  
14 I'm their secretary, but I'm here today  
15 as a myself, my person. What I'm asking  
16 and requesting you to consider the  
17 boundaries to help keep my community  
18 unified, our community within the  
19 current boundaries has shared values.  
20 As such, there should be shared access  
21 to services. Dividing the district  
22 along Gun Hill Road and Bronxwood and  
23 Gun Hill Road and Holland Avenue will  
24 require a further distance to municipal  
25 government services and in most



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1  
2 instances, double the travel time. In  
3 2019 the census estimated that the  
4 region has an ownership rate of 39.1  
5 percent with 60.2 of home owners  
6 identifying as black compared to the  
7 borough which was 18.9 percent ownership  
8 and 29.0 for homeowners identifying as  
9 black. To divide this community would  
10 be to disenfranchise the community and  
11 weaken political power. I am compelled  
12 and begging that the commission  
13 reconsider these district lines and  
14 reconsider Gun Hill and the Valley  
15 generations. Of our families have grown  
16 up in this community and we would like  
17 to continue to have this unified  
18 community. We have spent decades  
19 fighting for adequate funding for our  
20 community and especially our schools  
21 such as Evander, which is, by the way, I  
22 overlook that school from my building.  
23 We were able to finally secure \$778,000  
24 for capital improvements for the Evander  
25 High School campus. This is an absolute

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1  
2 historic institution in our community,  
3 with generations of my fellow neighbors  
4 going to that high school. These  
5 programs require adequate funding and  
6 the neighboring council districts  
7 applied already, have their existing  
8 commitments and institutes. What I  
9 would say is as a long-standing resident  
10 of community District 12 I implore the  
11 commission to keep our families together  
12 and restore the original district  
13 boundaries. Our generation will be able  
14 to succeed due to the resources we are  
15 able to access and we would greatly  
16 appreciate being able to offer the next  
17 generation the same access and resources  
18 and thank you for your time.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
20 your testimony as well. We'll go  
21 virtual now and first up for virtual is  
22 Lori Goodman followed by Emerita Torres  
23 and then followed by Henry Euler. First  
24 up Lori Goodman. Nope, okay -- uh, next  
25 is Emerita Torres.

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1  
2 MS TORRES: Thank you, can you hear  
3 me okay?

4 CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes, we can.

5 MS. TORRES: Great, good evening,  
6 thank you for the opportunity to  
7 testify, my name is Emerita Torres, I  
8 was born and raised in the Bronx. I  
9 lived in current council district 17 in  
10 the Bronx, I also serve as Democratic  
11 state committee member for the  
12 (inaudible) district in the Bronx  
13 serving Longwood, Huntspoint, Soundview,  
14 Garden Park and Passing Point before I  
15 was elected I helped formed a mutual  
16 aide, group which worked to serve needs  
17 of residents across the Bronx during the  
18 pandemic recognizing the issue of  
19 improving space, we organized money to  
20 provide relief to community members,  
21 since being elected by continuing that  
22 work while promoting critical civic  
23 engagement activities and outreach with  
24 assessors. I also serve as a board  
25 member for the women's housing and

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1  
2 economic development corporation a  
3 webco. Webco provides comprehensive  
4 community development in the south Bronx  
5 including building, affordable housing,  
6 youth events, supports workforce  
7 development education and wellness.  
8 Lastly, I also serve as vice president  
9 of policy for the Community Service  
10 Society of New York. In this role, I  
11 combine strategic advocacy with  
12 management and policy analysis to  
13 provide a more accurate role of city and  
14 state. So, today I'm speaking in my  
15 personal capacity as a resident of the  
16 Bronx and New York City and I bring the  
17 knowledge and living experiences of all  
18 of these roles, which informs the  
19 testimony I present today. I have two  
20 main concerns with the preliminary maps.  
21 One huge concern I had was a shifting of  
22 the Kingsbridge armory and the  
23 Kingsbridge Heights community from  
24 existing council District 14 to council  
25 District 11. The decision to displace

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1  
2 this historic landmark and this  
3 important community of interests will  
4 distort decision-making power over a  
5 critical community asset and critical  
6 community in and of itself that has long  
7 been a part of District 14. My  
8 suggestion is to keep the Kingsbridge  
9 armory and Kingsbridge Heights in  
10 District 14 (inaudible) and protect  
11 community interest there. Secondly, I  
12 have a deep concern generally about  
13 (inaudible) weight given to the voices  
14 of Staten Island residents in the  
15 current maps. The preliminary maps  
16 meets three wholly contained districts  
17 within Staten Island and seriously  
18 underpopulates these districts at the  
19 expense of every other borough including  
20 the Bronx. Every vote must count  
21 equally, one person, one vote and the  
22 preliminary maps (inaudible). I urge  
23 the commission to distribute the  
24 populations among the five boroughs more  
25 equally and equitably and avoid

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1  
2           weakening the hope of our communities.  
3           In closing, I want to sincerely thank  
4           the commission for the opportunity to  
5           testify for all the work they've done so  
6           far, thank you.

7           CHAIR WALCOTT:   And thank you for  
8           your testimony.   Uh -- next up  
9           virtually, Henry Euler.

10          MR. EULER:   Yes, can you hear me?

11          CHAIR WALCOTT:   Yes, we can.

12          MR. EULER:   Oh good, my name is  
13          Henry Euler, I'm the president of the  
14          Auburndale Improvement Association, in  
15          Flushing Queens.   I'm also the vice  
16          president of the Queens Center Congress  
17          (inaudible), dozens of civic and  
18          community organizations in Queens  
19          county.   I'm also a member of my  
20          (inaudible) I'm representing my local  
21          civic organization -- uh tonight with  
22          this testimony.   You may wonder why a  
23          Queens person is testifying in the Bronx  
24          hearing.   Uh -- last night -- uh there  
25          were so many people registered virtually

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1  
2 to speak at the Queens hearing that they  
3 did not have time for everyone, so they  
4 suggested we re-register at another  
5 period, so I thank the commission for  
6 doing that and I thank my neighbors in  
7 the Bronx for allowing me to come to  
8 their meeting -- um, my association is a  
9 little bit concerned about the lines  
10 that have been drawn in the 19th  
11 district. In general, we are pretty  
12 pleased with what we have, but one  
13 section of our community is called  
14 Station Road and that's been split into  
15 two districts uh -- part of it is in  
16 District 20 to the west and part of it  
17 is remaining in district 19. Currently,  
18 all of Station Road is in district 19.  
19 Now the last time this came, around 10  
20 years ago, a similar situation existed,  
21 the proposal was to split Station Road,  
22 but after community members spoke, it  
23 was decided to specifically reunite  
24 Station Road into the 19th District and  
25 that's what we're asking for now, is

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1  
2 that district -- uh the Station Road  
3 section be reunited into council  
4 District 19. It's a similar area in  
5 terms of solving, in terms of issues, so  
6 we feel that it should together -- a  
7 theme that I've been hearing all night  
8 tonight here in the Bronx meeting and  
9 also the Queens meeting, all the people  
10 want to be in the same neighborhood,  
11 want to be in the same district and I  
12 think that commissioners should heed  
13 that -- uh the desire of the people. Um  
14 -- going a little bit towards the east  
15 of us is a section called Bayside Hills,  
16 it's not in my civic area, however it  
17 has a similar situation, if the proposal  
18 is to split Bayside Hills between  
19 district 19 and District 20 -- 23  
20 currently, Bayside Hills is all in 23.  
21 So I would think that to balance the  
22 numbers, if you put Station Road  
23 together, we should also put Bayside  
24 Hills together, it would make sense, so  
25 that's what I'm requesting and the lines



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1  
2 we are proposing -- uh was vetted by  
3 somebody named Paul Glasino, he's a land  
4 use chair for the Queens Civic Congress  
5 and he did a study for all of Queens  
6 County, trying to keep neighborhoods  
7 together, communities with an interest  
8 together, that's very important, so I  
9 hope that you examine his proposal, I've  
10 also handed in my written testimony as  
11 well as maps about Station Road and I  
12 appreciate the chance to speak tonight,  
13 thanks again.

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
15 your testimony and thank you for  
16 following up as well. Next we have  
17 Geraldine, I only have one name, is  
18 Geraldine, is she there, no -- uh and  
19 then after that virtually Dannelly  
20 Rodriguez, is Dannelly Rodriguez there,  
21 no, okay, we'll go back to in person and  
22 now we'll have is it Karree-Lyn Gordon,  
23 Orlando Ovalles and Carlos Vargas-Ramos,  
24 first up Karree-Lyn Gordon.

25 MS. GORDON: Um -- good evening to

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the commission--

CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you just move  
the mic down a little that way --

MS. GORDON: Sure.

CHAIR WALCOTT: There you go.

MS. GORDON: How's that?

CHAIR WALCOTT: Sounds better.

MS. GORDON: Okay, thank you, can  
you hear me, thank you for saying my  
name correctly --

CHAIR WALCOTT: Oh wow.

MS. GORDON: That was awesome.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for the --

MS. GORDON: My name is Dr.  
Karree-Lyn Gordon and I'm here on behalf  
of District 12. I'm a resident there,  
I've been a resident there for two times  
20 plus and I was born and raised in the  
Bronx, I'm here to ask you all,  
unfortunately my phone died, so my  
script is gone with it, so I have to go  
ad-lib.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And you can submit.

MS. GORDON: Sorry?

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2 CHAIR WALCOTT: You can submit it.

3 MS. GORDON: Oh, I plan to, I still  
4 will submit it, but in the meantime, as  
5 I said, I was a resident there for a  
6 long time, I attended Evander Childs  
7 High School. I'm asking the commission  
8 to please reconsider the lines along Gun  
9 Hill Road. Evander is really important  
10 to us -- uh, actually there's five of  
11 us, I'm the only one of my brothers and  
12 sisters that wasn't smart enough to go  
13 to one of the specialized high schools,  
14 but I'm also the only one of them that  
15 holds a graduate degree, so I'm also  
16 very proud of Evander Childs High School  
17 and it's really, really important that  
18 this school remains a part of District  
19 12. I heard a lot of people, and we are  
20 homeowners, talk about homeowners, I've  
21 also heard a lot of testimony about how  
22 the Bronx doesn't show up. District 12  
23 was the home of the essential worker, a  
24 lot of people aren't here because  
25 they're at work. Those homeowners a lot

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1  
2 of times have to work two jobs to keep  
3 those homes and to pay our taxes, so  
4 don't let the fact that you don't see a  
5 lot of people here mean that we don't  
6 care about those district lines. My  
7 father and mother, being both of people  
8 who worked two jobs to support their  
9 five children and never depended on any  
10 subsidies, okay, so again I really ask  
11 the council to really, really consider  
12 what it is in the Bronx, what it means  
13 to us, also first generation of two  
14 immigrant parents who came here with  
15 little to nothing that was able to buy a  
16 house and to work hard and still have  
17 that home today, we're being surrounded  
18 by lots of people who aren't homeowners  
19 and we welcome them into our diverse  
20 community, but we also want you to take  
21 in consideration those of us who have  
22 worked and contributed to the upbuilding  
23 of the Bronx, thank you very much.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
25 your testimony, next is Orlando Ovalles,

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is Orlando here, okay we'll come back,  
thank you for letting me know, uh Carlos  
Vargas-Ramos.

MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: Good evening, Mr.  
Chair, I actually have a handout to pass  
out to illustrate my points.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Sure. You're gonna  
have to move it up.

MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: Yeah.

CHAIR WALCOTT: There you go.

MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: Mr. Chair,  
commissioners, buenas tardes, my name is  
Carlos Cargas-Ramos, I am the director  
for public policy for the Center for  
Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College,  
City University of New York the  
institution of Lehman College and I am  
here to comment on the preliminary  
council district maps drawn by the  
commission by you. Since my general  
impressions of the preliminary maps will  
certainly exceed three minutes, I will  
also be submitting written testimony  
along with our own analysis of the

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1  
2 demographic changes that have taken  
3 place in New York City in the  
4 intervening decade. In the interest of  
5 time, my comments will center on how  
6 redistricting will affect the Hispanic  
7 population specifically in the  
8 configuration of plurality districts and  
9 the deviation of the ideal target  
10 population favoring districts in Staten  
11 Island. The commission has drawn 29  
12 majority districts and 22 plurality  
13 districts. Of the 51 districts  
14 preliminarily drawn, non-Hispanic whites  
15 represent the majority in 11 districts  
16 and they are the plurality in nine  
17 Hispanics represent the majority in ten  
18 districts and the plurality in five,  
19 non-Hispanic blacks are the majority in  
20 five districts and the popularity in  
21 five, non-Hispanics are the  
22 majority in two districts and the  
23 plurality in three. This outcome  
24 overall is surprising when compared to  
25 the composition of current council

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1  
2 districts in light of the 2020 census  
3 result. Presently 28 of the current  
4 council districts are majority  
5 districts, in which a single ethnic  
6 ethno-racial group is the majority of  
7 the district population. In another 23  
8 districts no single ethno-racial group  
9 represents the majority of the  
10 population of the district, even if one  
11 of the single groups may capture a  
12 single -- uh the greater proportion of  
13 the population that is the plurality  
14 specifically non-Hispanic whites are the  
15 majority of 11 council districts and the  
16 plurality in eight, Hispanics are the  
17 majority in nine districts and plurality  
18 in six, blacks are the majority in seven  
19 and the plurality in four and Asians are  
20 the majority in one district and the  
21 plurality in five. Given that the  
22 (inaudible) census results which has  
23 showed a slight decrease in the  
24 non-Hispanic white population, it is not  
25 surprising to see preliminary plans that

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1  
2 maintain the number of majority  
3 non-Hispanic white districts at 11, but  
4 the preliminary plans increased the  
5 number of non-Hispanic white plurality  
6 districts from to nine from eight. This  
7 is a 13 percent increase. In contrast,  
8 the number of Hispanic majority  
9 districts increases from 9 to 10, which  
10 is an 11 percent increase but the number  
11 of Hispanic plurality districts  
12 decreases from 6 to 5, a 17 percent  
13 decrease for non-Hispanic Asians, the  
14 increase of Asian majority districts  
15 from 1 to 2 represents 100 percent  
16 increase, but a decrease in Asian  
17 plurality districts from five to three  
18 represents a sixty percent decrease, the  
19 decrease of uh one non-Hispanic black  
20 majority district from the current  
21 configuration, uh, is a 14 percent  
22 decrease while the increase in one  
23 plurality uh -- non-Hispanic black  
24 district is a 13 percent increase. The  
25 difference in the district's population



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1  
2 distribution in the preliminary plan  
3 that seems to position the non-Hispanic  
4 white population for descriptive  
5 representation disproportionately is  
6 evident in how those plans affect  
7 plurality districts. For instance,  
8 under the present configuration of  
9 district lines, 41 percent of district 7  
10 is Hispanic, 20 percent is non-Hispanic  
11 white, on the preliminary plans the  
12 Hispanic population in district 7  
13 declines to 35 percent while the  
14 non-Hispanic white population increases  
15 to 34 percent the Hispanic population in  
16 district 7 did decline 13 percent  
17 between 2010 and 2020 under the current  
18 configuration while the non-Hispanic  
19 population increased by seven percent,  
20 however the proportional declining  
21 Hispanic population in district 7 under  
22 the preliminary plan is 15 percent  
23 compared to the disproportionate  
24 increase of 22 percent of the  
25 non-Hispanic white population in

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1  
2 district 7's adjacent district, district  
3 10, which experienced a similar uh  
4 Hispanic population decline 11 and a  
5 similar non-Hispanic white population  
6 increased nine percent at the  
7 proportional population change on the  
8 preliminary district's plans was minus  
9 0.9 and minus 0.83 and this doesn't  
10 appear to be commensurate with the  
11 actual population changes in those these  
12 two districts.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you start to  
14 wrap up, sir.

15 MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: What?

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you start to  
17 wrap up.

18 MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: Um, I have  
19 comments on district 32, 34, 36, no I  
20 will not read them.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay.

22 MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: I will just point  
23 out the fact that and you will see them  
24 in the illustrations, that it is more  
25 than district 7 and 10, we also have

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1  
2 district 38 and district 26 and district  
3 32. Briefly, I will just mention that  
4 in regards to the overrepresentation of  
5 districts in Staten Island that there is  
6 in doing a statistical analysis -- uh,  
7 there is a greater proportion of  
8 Hispanics having a slightly greater  
9 population than districts with greater  
10 proportions of non-Hispanic whites,  
11 which are associated with slight uh  
12 slightly smaller demographics. From a  
13 numerical perspective, districts with  
14 fewer residents are thought of as having  
15 greater political power as it takes  
16 fewer voters to elect a representative  
17 than has the same voting power in the  
18 council as residents of districts with  
19 more residents adherence to the one  
20 person, one vote principle prevents  
21 deviation from numerical equality and  
22 populations for congressional districts.

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: I need you to wrap  
24 up, really.

25 MR. VARGAS-RAMOS: Okay, we hope

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that you consider that when drawing the council districts.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you again as well, okay, thank you for your testimony, I appreciate it thank you very much, uh -- Judy Hudson, is Judy Hudson here, Judy Hudson, then next will be LaVerne Best King and then Shanell Finney.

MS. KING: Okay, good evening, I can't speak to the statistics --

CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you just identify yourself because I called --

MS. KING: Yes, I will, I will, sir.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you.

MS. KING: I cannot speak to the statistics, but I'm here on behalf of District 12 and I can only speak from my passion about the community in which I grew up. My name is LaVerne Best King, I have lived in the Bronx on East 221st Street between Paulding and Laconia Avenue since I was three years old, my grandparents, aunt and uncle lived

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1  
2 around the corner on east 222nd Street.  
3 I attended elementary and high school in  
4 the district at PS 78 and Evander Childs  
5 High School, I left to attend college at  
6 Syracuse University and returned upon  
7 graduation and began my career starting  
8 as an assistant teacher at the  
9 Williamsbridge NAACP day care center,  
10 then as a field director with the Girl  
11 Scout Council of Greater New York,  
12 servicing troops and volunteers in  
13 District 12 and later joined the NYPD  
14 and became the first youth coordinator  
15 assigned in patrol borough Bronx  
16 community affairs, in part and thanks to  
17 the connections and history built in our  
18 district. Our district is special to me  
19 personally because it birthed my passion  
20 for youth and community my aunt, LaVerne  
21 Turner, who is my namesake, was an  
22 integral part of this community with  
23 East 219th Street and White Plains Road  
24 bearing her name, working with her on  
25 countless community projects including

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1  
2 protesting for a traffic light on East  
3 222nd Street and Paulden Avenue, that  
4 tells my age, it is these experiences  
5 and seeing my community come together  
6 that inspired me, along with my  
7 sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority  
8 incorporated Ada Omega Omega chapter to  
9 begin a mentoring program to begin a  
10 mentoring program. This program  
11 services young women grades 9 to 12  
12 right here in District 12 and has done  
13 so for 31 years. There are narratives  
14 about black communities that are  
15 disparaging and disheartening, I have  
16 never known that to be true based on my  
17 experiences in the district. Our  
18 community is strong familiar from Valley  
19 Day to Gun Hill Day and all in between,  
20 we are one large family spanning  
21 generations many like mine my children  
22 on East 222nd Street, my siblings in the  
23 Valley, nieces, nephews and cousins in  
24 Eastchester and Co-Op City all living  
25 and raising their families in the

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1  
2 district. It is important to maintain,  
3 cherish and celebrate our district and  
4 leave it as is, together, thank you for  
5 your time.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
7 your testimony, uh -- is Shanell Finney,  
8 welcome.

9 MS. FINNEY: Hi, my name is Shanell  
10 Finney, I too am from District 12. I  
11 was born in District 12. I went away  
12 for college at Utica College of Syracuse  
13 University, came back, bought my first  
14 home in District 12, started my career  
15 in interning for Housing Preservation  
16 and Development then going over as a  
17 paralegal at Arnold and Porter and  
18 beyond then I have family still in  
19 District 12 and I'd say the area is very  
20 unique and I was inspired to return  
21 based on the improvements made and the  
22 familiarity with everyone in the  
23 neighborhood. Having lived in other  
24 Bronx districts I can say when my  
25 co-workers and guests and clients come

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1  
2 to visit they feel a difference and I  
3 think that sense of community shows  
4 based on, you know, the DNA that is  
5 built into the area -- um we have so  
6 many, I'd say like commissioner Riley,  
7 like very passionate about the area,  
8 district leaders, other homeowners, our  
9 local businesses there's a great sense  
10 of community and it's very inspiring the  
11 areas of the commission you know you  
12 guys wish to remove that have marked out  
13 -- um, have made long-lasting  
14 contributions and I -- it's interesting  
15 from Valley Day, I used to go there as a  
16 little girl, I moved to Charlottesville  
17 and came back and those traditions still  
18 exist, the local school activities from  
19 Evander, I used to get free lunch  
20 whether it was a Souza or like PS 111 or  
21 112. The long-needed renovations and  
22 resources that --um, have now taken  
23 place within the past couple of years  
24 along Gun Hill Road area, it was much  
25 needed and they have finally been able



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1  
2 to garner the support to get that so --  
3 um and also transportation in the area  
4 is not very consistent and reliable  
5 after you reach 180th and coming into  
6 that area -- those on -- that you guys  
7 have removed on the map from Gun Hill up  
8 in (inaudible) rely -- in Co-Op City, we  
9 rely on like Baychester Avenue and Gun  
10 Hill, those train stations and they have  
11 to commute far to get there, so why not  
12 keep us together if there's already a  
13 divide on how we navigate. So I come  
14 here today to thank you guys for your  
15 participation and help of what you've  
16 done thus far, but to keep in  
17 consideration of keeping Gun Hill and  
18 District 12 together as is -- um, and  
19 especially in that unique area of the  
20 Valley and Gun Hill, so thank you.

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

23 MR. AVILA: Greetings, commissioners  
24 and thank you for the opportunity to  
25 testify. My name is Jose Francisco

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1  
2 Avila. I am the chairman of the board  
3 of the Garifuna Coalition USA INC, a  
4 non-profit community-based organization  
5 founded in 1998 and based in the south  
6 Bronx, I am one of the founding members  
7 having been involved in the organization  
8 and its advocacy. Since its inception  
9 the Garifuna community is an  
10 Afro-indigenous community that began  
11 migrating to New York City in the 1930s.  
12 However, the discovery of this rich  
13 culture and tradition arose from the  
14 tragic fire on March 25, 1990 at the  
15 Happyland Social Club fire. Most of the  
16 87 people who perished were Garifuna.  
17 It was this tragic event that developed  
18 the foundation for the need to raise  
19 awareness of the Garifuna culture and  
20 heritage. The mission of the Garifuna  
21 coalition USA INC is to advocate for the  
22 rights of the Garifuna immigrants and  
23 strengthen our participation, civic  
24 participation within the community by  
25 nurturing local leadership to

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1  
2 educational and cultural programs and  
3 bring together community members across  
4 racial and ethnic lines. It seeks to  
5 improve the social, economic, civic and  
6 cultural conditions of New York ethnic  
7 community. As a part of that mission we  
8 embark on our first effort to  
9 participate in the redistricting -- in  
10 the redistricting to ensure that we can  
11 define our community, the geographic  
12 reach and advocate for our own  
13 interests, currently in the preliminary  
14 plan the community is divided between  
15 four districts 8, 15, 16 and 17. This  
16 division among community, among our  
17 community creates issues in creating  
18 accountability from elected officials  
19 and limits our access to -- excuse me,  
20 to critical resources -- to critical  
21 resources which deepens the  
22 socio-economic inequality that exists in  
23 our community. We have defined our  
24 community boundaries as Freeman Avenue  
25 on the north, 135th Street to the south,

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1  
2 Webster Avenue to the east and Bruckner  
3 Boulevard to the west. Our community is  
4 interested in consolidating into as few  
5 districts as possible. Ideally, we  
6 would like to be consolidated in  
7 Districts 8 and 17 and which will  
8 benefit our community by granting,  
9 excuse me, granting the attention and  
10 awareness of our community that our  
11 community needs and will help build  
12 accountability for our community and  
13 empowering our voice through the  
14 political process. Thank you for  
15 listening to my testimony, I hope that I  
16 have given you a good description of my  
17 Garifuna community of interest, which  
18 has been hidden in plain sight for too  
19 long. Hopefully this testimony this  
20 testimony will build our efforts to  
21 increase the visibility of the Garifuna  
22 community, (inaudible), gracias, thank  
23 you.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir,  
25 we'll have one more in-person, then

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1  
2 we'll switch to virtual and then we'll  
3 come back to -- uh, in person, so Gloria  
4 Rodriguez, is Gloria Rodriguez here, if  
5 not, I will call in person Alonzo De  
6 Castro and then we'll go to virtual.

7 MR. DE CASTRO: Good evening,  
8 commissioners, my name is Alonzo De  
9 Castro. I'm 95 years and 8 months old.  
10 My family and I moved into a home on  
11 East 224th Street 58 years ago, my wife  
12 and I raised three daughters who  
13 attended local public schools and all  
14 three are college graduates. With our  
15 neighbors we organized the East of  
16 Laconia Community Association, whose  
17 purpose was to ensure that we receive  
18 the services of city agencies that we're  
19 entitled to. As the association grew we  
20 developed a relationship within the  
21 elementary, middle and high schools  
22 where, with the help of businesses and  
23 our own funds, we were able to provide  
24 scholarships and grants to graduates.  
25 As a member of St. Luke's episcopal

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1  
2 church on East 222nd Street, I founded  
3 an organization too, we're named Men on  
4 a Mission to support the proposed  
5 building of a community center. Even  
6 though that center was never built, we  
7 used the money to provide scholarships  
8 for students. In 2009 I organized,  
9 along with Shirley Farron, the president  
10 of the NAACP Williamsbridge, the  
11 Northeast Bronx Community Coalition.  
12 The main purpose of the coalition was to  
13 petition our elected officials for our  
14 community center, which was lacking in  
15 our community. After many community  
16 meetings and meetings with our elected  
17 officials, the northeast Bronx YMCA is  
18 now in operation with a membership of  
19 over 1700. When we first moved into  
20 this district in 1966 every election,  
21 every elected official representing us  
22 was of Caucasian or Caucasians. After  
23 many, decades and through the work of so  
24 many the political landscape has  
25 changed, now every elected official is

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1  
2 Afro-American that represents our  
3 community and I'm talking about  
4 community District 12 including our own  
5 Borough President Vanessa Gibson and  
6 District Attorney Darcel Clark and the  
7 speaker of the assembly Carl Hasting.  
8 The redistricting of the seats to the  
9 House of Representatives is causing our  
10 community to lose some Afro-American  
11 political representation, as to the  
12 proposed lines comes to District 12 that  
13 would exclude Gun Hill Houses, Evander  
14 High School. I am against this, these  
15 two developments are integral parts of  
16 our community and I am urging you to  
17 retain them within the district lines,  
18 thank you very much.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: And let me thank you  
20 for your years of service to the  
21 community and to the city and thank you  
22 very much for your testimony. Going  
23 virtual, we are going to go to Antonia  
24 Clemente, Antonio Clemente.

25 MS. CLEMENTE: Yes, hi, hello

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1  
2 everybody (inaudible) good evening, my  
3 name is Antonia Clemente and I'm  
4 speaking on behalf of my community  
5 district in Sunset Park, Brooklyn New  
6 York, which includes council district 38  
7 -- uh includes neighborhoods of Red  
8 Hook, Park Slope, Windsor Terrace and  
9 Borough Park. I am a community resident  
10 born and raised in Sunset Park,  
11 homeowner for over 45 years, I am the  
12 executive director and founder of the  
13 Human Center, the only domestic violence  
14 organization working with, I think  
15 that's families in southwest Brooklyn,  
16 mainly comprised of recent immigrants  
17 with families and young children.  
18 Speaking on behalf of my family and many  
19 who are not able to join these hearings,  
20 we would like to convey our pressing  
21 concerns with the proposed district  
22 lines of legislative matters and the  
23 impact of reduction of the 38th council  
24 district will have on the representation  
25 of our Latino community. Our



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1  
2 neighborhood in Sunset Park shares a  
3 rich, extensive history beginning in the  
4 1960s and 70s when I attended public  
5 schools and shopped at the business  
6 trips on Fifth Avenue. At the time the  
7 community was comprised mainly of  
8 Italians, Irish, Scandinavian  
9 immigrants. I even noticed this  
10 firsthand the changes of the  
11 demographics in the community on the  
12 block where I grew up, in which I  
13 personally owned a home. There were not  
14 too many Latinos. Growing up in Sunset  
15 Park during that time, I remember being  
16 called a spick, not sure what that  
17 meant. As the community's demographics  
18 shifted with the influence of Latino  
19 immigrants beginning with Puerto  
20 Ricinos, Dominicans, Ecuadorians,  
21 Central Americans and now personally  
22 Mexicans, representation became a  
23 priority. As the years went by, the  
24 Latinx community activists at that time  
25 mobilized to ensure that we would have

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1  
2 representation within our educational  
3 and political systems. By the early  
4 1980s the new district lines were drawn  
5 to ensure that we would have Latino  
6 representation of the state assembly  
7 district and in the late 1990s Latino  
8 candidates ran for the District 38  
9 county district with having our first  
10 Latino elected official to city council  
11 in 19 -- in the 2000s. The current  
12 political district lines are  
13 significantly, if they're divided will  
14 significantly disenfranchise and  
15 disempower our collective voices. So  
16 many have worked so hard in the past to  
17 ensure that Latino representation is  
18 equal within our city governments at  
19 Sunset Park, Red Hook and Park Slope.  
20 Dissolving and dividing the 38th council  
21 districts joining in with Bay Ridge will  
22 have a negative impact in its  
23 significant loss of Latino  
24 representation with in New York City  
25 government (inaudible) poor

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1  
2 community-based organizations will be  
3 diluted, impacting direct services for  
4 our Latino community, which is closer to  
5 the well-being of individuals and  
6 community stability. When drawing new  
7 district lines, the interest of the  
8 Latino community at Sunset Park must be  
9 at the forefront, ensuring access to the  
10 candidates of choice that represent our  
11 community's interests and needs. We are  
12 already being divided by the  
13 redistricting of the congressional and  
14 (inaudible) lines. I request this  
15 commission to protect equal  
16 representation of our community as per  
17 the 1965 (inaudible) Act which forbids  
18 new districts maps to dilute the voting  
19 power of racial and language minority  
20 groups. The City charter also includes  
21 similar provisions that ensures fair and  
22 effective representation. I appeal to  
23 this commission to keep the old map  
24 intact, maintaining the 38th council  
25 district all in one district. For

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1  
2 transparency, we ask for inclusion in  
3 the redistricting development process,  
4 which will allow members of our  
5 community to engage and be aware of  
6 methods that determines their access to  
7 resources of political representation.  
8 Fairness must be at the center of the  
9 redistricting process, given the  
10 increase of the Latino population across  
11 our state in the past 10 years, it is  
12 vital that the redistricting process  
13 fairly draw lines representatives of  
14 changes that reflect our communities  
15 growth. Thank you for taking your time  
16 to listen, for the opportunity to share  
17 my concerns and this is an issue that is  
18 very, very dear to me because I seen the  
19 changes in my community, being that I'm  
20 born and raised here, so enjoy the rest  
21 of your summer. Respectfully, Antonia  
22 Clemente.

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
24 testimony. Next we will have someone  
25 I'm excited to introduce because the

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1  
2 last time we saw her, something new has  
3 happened and I want to say  
4 congratulations, it's my pleasure to  
5 have councilmember Sanchez virtually  
6 testifying, councilmember.

7 MS. SANCHEZ: Good evening, thank  
8 you so much, commissioner Walcott and  
9 yes, I am happy to report that I have  
10 brought a new resident into District 14  
11 since we were last together, baby  
12 (inaudible) was born, so, good evening,  
13 I am a councilmember Lydia Sanchez, new  
14 mom and also representing District 14 --  
15 um and I just want to thank you for  
16 allowing me to testify today at this  
17 district where I was born and raised and  
18 hopefully my baby will be what was born  
19 and now hopefully will be raised -- um,  
20 so, you know, just to -- I'm going to  
21 have a very short testimony today, I'll  
22 submit something in writing -- uh, but  
23 the bottom line for me today is I have  
24 -- uh, and my community has deep  
25 concerns about the preliminary lines;

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1  
2 District 14, as folks may know,  
3 encompasses the northwest Bronx,  
4 neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Fordham,  
5 University Heights, Mount Hope, largely  
6 low-income community of color, over 98  
7 percent people of color. Our median  
8 worker earns just \$21,000 per year and  
9 33 percent of our families live below  
10 the federal poverty line compared to 16  
11 percent city-wide and so I'll just I'm  
12 going to go, Kingsbridge, I'm going to  
13 go south of the district and then I'm  
14 going to go -- uh, you know, the general  
15 context. So the first concern that we  
16 have with the preliminary lines is  
17 Kingsbridge -- uh, the new lines removed  
18 the Kingsbridge neighborhood in its  
19 entirety from District 14 and into  
20 District 11. Kingsbridge has been an  
21 essential part of our community for  
22 decades and so much so that the armory  
23 itself is iconic in our neighborhood.  
24 The armory has been the site of so much  
25 of our community's struggles, we have

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1  
2 community-based organizations like the  
3 Northwest Bronx Clergy Coalition, I see  
4 you in the audience there, wearing  
5 yellow shirts, who've been fighting for  
6 decades to redevelop the armory and it's  
7 not just the building, it's about the  
8 struggles that have united this  
9 community in fighting for that armory,  
10 for community economic development.  
11 Second, Kingsbridge Road itself is home  
12 to a vibrant commercial district, the  
13 new maps draw a line right down the  
14 center, dividing one side of the street  
15 from the other and the small businesses  
16 that are there are largely immigrant --  
17 uh, businesses that are serving the  
18 community and are very similar in  
19 profile, in terms of ownership and who  
20 they serve and all of that, to  
21 commercial corridors like Burnside  
22 Avenue, 183rd, 176st, to other corridors  
23 that are also in District 14 and are  
24 very dissimilar to two commercial  
25 corridors -- uh, in District 11 frankly,

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1  
2 and third, the Kingsbridge neighborhood  
3 itself is the largely Latinex lower  
4 income district, a home to mostly  
5 renters, who shop together, worship  
6 together and study together, so moving  
7 this community as a whole out of  
8 District 14 into a wealthier, wider  
9 neighborhood would, or neighboring  
10 district, would represent a dilution of  
11 voting power for protected class Latinos  
12 and a community that is a community of  
13 common interests with respect to so many  
14 of our sociodemographics. So the  
15 Kingsbridge neighborhood should remain  
16 in District 14, from the armory all the  
17 way to Kingsbridge Heights and now the  
18 south of the district has traditionally  
19 been covered -- uh, has been bounded by  
20 the Grand Concourse or actually the  
21 entire district has been bounded by the  
22 Grand Concourse for the last 10 years --  
23 uh, the south of the district fighting  
24 across the Cross Bronx Expressway, this  
25 continues to make sense that there have



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1  
2           been some changes, but if -- uh, you  
3           know there were part -- portions of the  
4           district that would cut Kingsbridge and  
5           -- uh portions of the district in the  
6           south that had new population, new  
7           sections added, so I wanted to make sure  
8           to mention that those boundaries do make  
9           sense as they currently largely are and  
10          in the city-wide context, someone  
11          mentioned this earlier, this district  
12          should be balanced. It's not fair for a  
13          part of the city that I'm sorry, I love  
14          y'all, I love y'all Staten Island, but  
15          it's not fair for Staten Island to have  
16          districts that are smaller in population  
17          because that makes the rest of us have  
18          to represent more individuals, which is  
19          not there to the individuals in each  
20          district, so there has to be fairness in  
21          that process because it's (inaudible)  
22          for the rest of the city and so in  
23          closing, thank you, I want to thank the  
24          commissioners for allowing this time for  
25          testimony, many of my neighbors are here

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1  
2 today as well, I'm very glad and so the  
3 only thing that I would say is please  
4 listen to them, listen to -- listen to  
5 the neighbors and continue the work that  
6 you are doing, reaching out in  
7 communities or social media, every  
8 single which way that you are reaching  
9 out because it's, again it's all about  
10 them, all the voicing, all the concerns  
11 that I've heard, so thank you so much  
12 and I will get back to my baby.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,  
14 councilmember and congratulations to you  
15 as well -- uh, next up is uh virtually  
16 Denny Salas.

17 MR. SALAS: That's correct, thank  
18 you and first I want to congratulate the  
19 councilwoman for having a new child. I  
20 am too a new father, so you and I both  
21 are adding to the population out here in  
22 lower Manhattan, but I'm, also wanted to  
23 echo a lot of the councilwoman's  
24 concerns especially around the proposed  
25 -- uh, council districts in Staten

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1  
2 Island, but additionally, you know, I do  
3 believe in brevity, so keep it pretty  
4 quick -- um, I am in support of kind of  
5 the unity map that you can see on the  
6 redistricting new dot org website, where  
7 in council district number 2 they will  
8 add more of Latino percentage, the  
9 Latino population, in order to actually  
10 have proper authentication there, but  
11 additionally it benefits council  
12 district number 1 where you have a  
13 greater chance of having an agency  
14 representative in that district as well,  
15 so I believe that the commission should  
16 follow -- um, kind of the  
17 recommendations that are made out-- um,  
18 on the redistricting in the new unity  
19 map section -- uh, website, I think that  
20 would be pretty helpful for everybody  
21 else as well. Thank you very much for  
22 your time everybody, you have a  
23 wonderful night.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
25 your testimony, sir -- uh, next,

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virtually, councilmember Walsh.

MS. WALSH: Sorry about that, I hope that you can hear me okay --

CHAIR WALCOTT: Yes we can.

MS. WALSH: Okay, great -- um, my name is Katherine Walsh and I am a Sunset Park, Brooklyn resident, I am providing testimony about the redistricting that's affecting city council 38, this is for -- uh we're currently represented by Alexa Ebilis and it includes Red Hook and Sunset Park. I'm really concerned about the maps, the redistricting proposed maps and I would really urge the commissioners to think about the principles of equity and principles of keeping communities of interest together. We in Sunset Park, I've heard the testimony earlier from another neighbor who was citing a lot of the communities of interests and challenges and problems that, you know, our community faces and the challenges that

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1  
2 we're working through -- um, you know we  
3 are a heavy working-class community of  
4 immigrants having the Latino population  
5 and as well as Asian American and -- um,  
6 looking at the proposed maps that  
7 basically take Sunset Park and we're  
8 just with a large percentage of Bay  
9 Ridge, Brooklyn -- um, is -- uh, poses  
10 the potential to dilute a lot of the  
11 representation as well as the voice of  
12 our neighbors -- um, so I want to just  
13 say a couple of things, about as you go  
14 about this process, thinking about  
15 concerns for equity, thinking about the  
16 concerns of keeping communities of  
17 interest together and keeping, keeping  
18 the concerns around the kinds of  
19 problems and challenges that we're  
20 facing -- um, one of the reasons that we  
21 need to keep Sunset Park and Red Hook  
22 together in District 38 is that we are a  
23 waterfront community, we are facing  
24 challenges, as we know, in New York  
25 City, New York State with the impacts of

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1  
2 climate change -- um, and we need a city  
3 councilmember who is able to be in a  
4 position to work directly on this issue  
5 -- um, with the neighborhoods of Red  
6 Hook and Sunset Park, another  
7 implication and another problem that we  
8 are directly facing in both Red Hook and  
9 Sunset Park is the issue around  
10 transportation and traffic. We both  
11 communities share a very large issue  
12 with trucking facilities, the BQE rips  
13 through our neighborhood, our  
14 neighborhood was divided by the Brooklyn  
15 Queens Expressway and this has serious  
16 implications for the health,  
17 transportation, well-being of our  
18 neighbors, so Red Hook and Sunset Park  
19 are working together on this particular  
20 issue of transportation, last mile  
21 trucking facilities, massive BQE  
22 implications -- uh, health, asthma, we  
23 have some of the highest asthma rates  
24 both in Red Hook and Sunset Park and we  
25 need to keep our communities together

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1  
2 because we're facing shared challenges  
3 and we're facing shared problems. So we  
4 have major concerns about how this  
5 redistricting basically stops in its  
6 tracks a lot of the work that we're  
7 doing in Sunset Park and Red Hook on  
8 environmental justice, so I urge the  
9 commissioners, please think about the  
10 communities of interest equity and then  
11 the physical problems and environmental  
12 problems that our communities face and  
13 why Sunset Park and Red Hook should be  
14 kept together, thank you.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much  
16 and I'll say, on your part, very  
17 impressive in timing with the  
18 three-minute mark, so thank you very  
19 much for your testimony, as we  
20 transition back to in person, we have  
21 two commissioners who have joined us  
22 since the -- uh, introductions  
23 initially, so Maria and Kevin, would you  
24 like to take a moment to introduce  
25 yourselves.

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1  
2 MR. HANRATTY: Kevin Hanratty from  
3 Queens.

4 MS. MATEO: Good evening, Maria  
5 Mateo from Queens as well.

6 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you both and  
7 in transitioning back to in person  
8 Orlando Ovalles has been has joined us,  
9 so you're up next, sir and then  
10 following him will be Christina Chaise  
11 and Jagpreet Singh, welcome.

12 MR. OVALLES: Hello, good afternoon,  
13 commissioners -- um, okay, my name is  
14 Orlando Ovalles. I am the northeast  
15 director of civic engagement for the  
16 National Association of Latino Elected  
17 and Appointed Officials and Educational  
18 fund, our organization is the nation's  
19 leading non-profit, nonpartisan  
20 organization that facilitates full  
21 Latino participation that hire in the  
22 political process, from citizenship to  
23 public service, we are advocating for a  
24 redistricting process which results in  
25 maps that provide Latinos and other



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1  
2 underrepresented groups with a fair  
3 opportunity to elect leaders who are  
4 responsive and accountable to their  
5 communities, as we have stated in front  
6 of this redistricting body and other --  
7 and others, we continue to urge this  
8 commission to conduct an accessible,  
9 inclusive and transparent redistricting  
10 process New Yorkers deserve a fair  
11 opportunity to provide feedback while  
12 engaging with the redistricting process.  
13 We respectfully request that the  
14 commission listen to the voices of the  
15 communities of interest in the Bronx.  
16 It is paramount for these communities to  
17 remain intact within the maps as they  
18 share social, economic and cultural  
19 interests. It is critical that the maps  
20 that result from this redistricting  
21 process comply with the provisions set  
22 forth in the U.S Constitution and the  
23 federal Voting Rights Act. To meet  
24 these requirements, the commission maps  
25 must reflect the growth of the Latino

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community in the city and the Bronx over the last decade. According to data from the 2020 census, the Latino share of New York City's population is 28.9 percent, Latinos represent 56.4 percent of the population in the Bronx, the largest share among the rest of the counties in the city Throughout the State of New York Latino population growth outpaced the overall population increase between 2010 and 2020. Here in the Bronx, the Latino population grew by 8.8 percent while the borough's overall population growth was 3.5 percent. The maps must ensure that Latinos achieve a fair representation by having the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice through the new district lines. The commission must also abide by the New York City charters chapter 2a, which sets forth the provisions for its operations. Through our work on Agasse Kontal, a national campaign to ensure a full count of the Latino community

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1  
2 across the country, we know that the  
3 2020 census was unique in many ways.  
4 The pause in normal work and daily  
5 operation from the pandemic created a  
6 dire effect on Latino households,  
7 resulting in a lack of participation in  
8 the 2020 census. Additionally, the  
9 citizenship question that was proposed  
10 by the former administration although  
11 overseeing the cost fear and lack of  
12 trust in the in the (inaudible) mission  
13 and efforts to count everyone. The  
14 commission should consider that,  
15 nationally, the undercount of Latinos  
16 was 4.99 percent. As the only majority  
17 Latino county in the northeastern United  
18 States Bronx residents are likely  
19 already underrepresented and the data  
20 used to draw and underrepresented in the  
21 data used to drop to draw the maps.  
22 Therefore, the commission was account,  
23 not only for the growing Latino  
24 population, but also the potential  
25 undercounts in the redistricting

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1  
2 process. We hope that this  
3 recommendation will be useful and  
4 seriously considered in the commission's  
5 efforts during this process. Thank you  
6 for the opportunity to provide testimony  
7 and for your attention to our comments.

8 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir, for  
9 your testimony. Next is Jagpreet Singh.

10 MS. SINGH: Good evening,  
11 commissioners -- uh, my name is Jagpreet  
12 Singh, I'm the political director at  
13 Desea's Rising Up and Moving, we work  
14 with the south Asian Indo-Caribbean  
15 working-class populations around issues  
16 of housing immigration and much more.  
17 The south Asian Indo-Caribbean community  
18 has called New York City home for over  
19 150 years. We are your drivers, your  
20 porters, the construction workers who  
21 build the giant skyscrapers, the  
22 healthcare workers who keep our  
23 hospitals running, food service and  
24 delivery workers that have put New York  
25 City on the map as a culinary

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1  
2 institution. We kept the city running  
3 before the pandemic, we kept it running  
4 during the pandemic and we'll continue  
5 to keep it running. Yet most of the  
6 districts where our community lives in,  
7 whether it's on the federal, state or  
8 city, lines continue to be cracked. I'm  
9 here to talk about my community and the  
10 place where I live, south Queens areas  
11 of Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and  
12 Ozone Park. My family has lived here  
13 the religious institution I visit every  
14 Sunday, my (inaudible) is here. This  
15 area is defined by Jamaica Avenue to the  
16 north, Van Wyck to the east, Conduit  
17 Boulevard to the south and the Brooklyn  
18 border to the west. This home, this  
19 area is home to a large Punjabi  
20 Indo-Caribbean and Bangladesh  
21 neighborhood. They shop along Liberty  
22 and 101 avenue, the religious  
23 institutions the Munders, the Gurdwaras,  
24 the Masjids, the churches are peppered  
25 across the district and their growth has

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1  
2           been tremendous, our community saw us  
3           the biggest growth in New York City and  
4           we are the reason that New York City did  
5           not -- New York as a state did not lose  
6           two congressional districts because of  
7           the growth we saw in the south Asian  
8           community. This Richmond Hill is also  
9           the home to where we saw the first hate  
10          crime after 9/11 due to 9/11 where a  
11          sick man was beaten almost to death the  
12          night of 9/11. And we thought this  
13          would have disappeared, but we saw  
14          similar crimes pop up again just a  
15          couple of months ago against elder  
16          people within our community. We have no  
17          representation currently and we're tired  
18          of sitting aside and taking that, I ask  
19          you not to continue this history of  
20          cracking of our south Asian  
21          Indo-Caribbean communities. This  
22          commission has historical significance  
23          of having the first south Asian  
24          commissioner, I ask you to continue this  
25          history and making sure that you create

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1  
2 a district in south Queens that reflect  
3 us. I support the unity map in  
4 maintaining three majority black  
5 districts still in southeast Queens,  
6 while creating a plurality south Asian  
7 and Indo-Caribbean district, I also want  
8 to note that as far as the population  
9 meters go, this Indo-Caribbean community  
10 often counts themselves as other, but  
11 with the combination of the south Asian  
12 community there, they do create a  
13 plurality Asian district and again, we  
14 support the unity map -- as a final  
15 note, I do want to add, as several other  
16 commentators have made, by keeping  
17 Staten Island contiguous, you made  
18 Queens non-contiguous, this makes no  
19 sense, no sense at all. We need equity  
20 and that only comes by -- as one of the  
21 councilmember has said before, one  
22 person, one vote, please take that into  
23 mind, thank you very much.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
25 testimony. Next is -- is it Rowshon

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1  
2 Nippa?

3 MR. NIPPA: Thank you, my name is  
4 Rowshon Nippa. I lived in Bronx. I'm a  
5 Bronx community organizer of Ram Desh  
6 Dam -- this is rising up and moving as  
7 well as (inaudible) we work for south  
8 Asian and in the Caribbean community,  
9 especially for working class people. So  
10 as you know, Parkchester, Castle Hill --  
11 oh, sorry to mention that I'm actually  
12 Castle Hill side residence. We know all  
13 know the Parkchester, Castle Hill,  
14 Westchester Square are all are very  
15 centered with Parkchester as a district  
16 of 18 in Parkchester, this Starling  
17 Avenue, also known as Bangla Bhajar.  
18 Our black and brown community are  
19 together for long years, we know  
20 Parkchester has the most representations  
21 for Bangladeshi brown community in  
22 Bronx, our community are well known for  
23 their unity. As a community organizer,  
24 I work closely with south Asian  
25 community I know how (inaudible)



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1  
2 struggle there for the language and for  
3 all food, community clothing and  
4 everything, so we just -- if our  
5 district broken, it will be very  
6 difficult to get all the services,  
7 especially for the immigrant and newly  
8 immigrant community, so we -- and if we  
9 are not together, I still -- that's the  
10 struggle I think most people, especially  
11 working class and color people will  
12 struggle, so I strongly demand  
13 districting as same for our Senate and  
14 Congress, that's why we can get more  
15 resources for our language and  
16 cultural-based events and other  
17 services. We want to keep neighborhoods  
18 and communities intact keep these things  
19 compact and limit district crossover  
20 between boroughs avoid gerrymandering  
21 and avoid oddly-shaped district, so that  
22 we can live together as well as build  
23 together. Thank you so much for  
24 listening me.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for

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1  
2 your testimony, next up, excuse me, in  
3 person, is it Nagawang Yawagyentsang,  
4 after that, in person is it Kymel M.  
5 Yard?

6 MR. YARD: All right, can you hear  
7 me everybody, can you hear me all right.  
8 Sir, my name is Kymel Yard. I'm a  
9 resident of District 12 -- um, I -- my  
10 mother spoken earlier, my  
11 great-grandparents along with my  
12 maternal grandparents bought our house  
13 on 221st and 222nd Street before I was  
14 even imagined, not even thought of,  
15 imagined, and I have only left my  
16 community to go to college. I went to  
17 Binghamton University and I stayed in  
18 Binghamton for 12 years and the reason I  
19 stayed in Binghamton is because I wanted  
20 to create in Binghamton what I grew up  
21 with, like my councilmember. I went to  
22 high school at Mount St. Michael, I  
23 didn't get to fortunately attend  
24 elementary school in my district because  
25 of other experiences I had to have as a

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1  
2 young person, but my grandmother lived  
3 in the district and that was the safest,  
4 most secure, most stable home I've  
5 probably known my whole life. My mother  
6 lives there now and I live around the  
7 corner, also my friends still live in  
8 the district who I went to high school  
9 with, I watched their nieces, nephews,  
10 siblings grow up, I've watched kids who  
11 my grandmother babysit have kids in my  
12 district and so it hurts me to see the  
13 new map a little bit because -- uh, I  
14 remember as a kid watching my uncles  
15 play in Valley day and laughing because  
16 I'm like, you're 45 and not 23, hang it  
17 up and now we're talking about splitting  
18 the Valley right I went to Olinville  
19 middle school and now we're cutting up  
20 parts of Olinville. I wanted to go to  
21 Evander, but my mother said you're going  
22 to Mount St. Michael, but we're taking  
23 that out the district, from playing  
24 basketball from Gun Hill Park to Hafen  
25 park in the Valley. One of my first

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1  
2 jobs was working a PAL play street in  
3 Magenta Park. The district means so  
4 much to everyone in it because it shaped  
5 us, so even when we leave the district,  
6 we carry a piece of it with us  
7 everywhere we go. Our community is  
8 unique in that most people come and they  
9 get off the 2 train and they're like, am  
10 I in Jamaica and then they walk up the  
11 street and they go, but this is like the  
12 suburbs and then they go to Co-Op City  
13 and they shop and get all the things  
14 they need, so we are a beautiful  
15 illustration of what it means to be a  
16 community and a family and I think by  
17 drawing lines that break that  
18 continuity, we do a damage to ourselves  
19 as a society, as a city and as a nation.  
20 Thank you for your time.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you, sir,  
22 for your testimony -- uh in person then  
23 we'll switch to virtual is Christian  
24 Ramos. If not, then we'll switch,  
25 before we go to virtual, we'll get to

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1  
2 you in a second virtual -- uh, we'll do  
3 in person still, is it William Stanford  
4 Jr.?

5 MR. STANFORD: You omitted the  
6 remaining part, but I won't blame you  
7 for that because I'm already blaming you  
8 and your tag team all for what happened  
9 yesterday, earlier today in Queens.  
10 That was an absolute disgrace what you  
11 two did, I don't know what the hell you  
12 two were thinking --

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: First, watch your  
14 language and then you can continue, sir.

15 MR. STANFORD: Okay, among those who  
16 registered I was the first one who  
17 signed the sheet and yet I waited over  
18 four hours before I could testify, that  
19 doesn't make any sense, I don't know  
20 what happened, I don't know what you two  
21 were thinking. Okay, in the future if I  
22 -- uh register and I'm the first one who  
23 signs the sheet, I should testify first,  
24 I should not have to wait over four  
25 hours before testifying, what's the

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1  
2 logic to that reminds me of the MTA,  
3 which stands for money thrown away --  
4 uh, regarding the districts, okay  
5 District 12, I feel District 12 should  
6 be bounded by Gun Hill Road to the  
7 south, 241st Street to the north,  
8 Webster Avenue, all White Plains Road to  
9 the west, Eastchester Road to the east  
10 automatically because that's most of  
11 District 12 right there, District 11  
12 should be bounded by Gun Hill Road to  
13 the north, Fordham Road to the south,  
14 drawn out to the west, Webster to the  
15 east because in that perimeter it's  
16 community board 7 which lies at 220 East  
17 224th Street, just in this case you  
18 don't know or you forgot. As I said  
19 before, you should go by the bus  
20 corridors because that's the best way  
21 you can redraw the lines, that's not  
22 what you're doing, you're cutting the  
23 districts, you're breaking the districts  
24 and as I said yesterday, this isn't  
25 break up to make up like the Stylistics,

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1  
2           okay, this isn't Carlyn Ham of '92, spin  
3           the wheel made the deal, but apparently  
4           you forgot that part, are you more  
5           concerned about keeping the communities  
6           together, are you more concerned on  
7           keeping them separated. I'm sure you've  
8           heard that song, keep them separated  
9           years ago, I know I've heard, it is that  
10          what you're thinking, what are you  
11          doing, you could redraw the lines my  
12          way, which is better or your way which  
13          is worse, it makes no difference to me,  
14          but if you draw them your way -- redraw  
15          them your way, you'll continue getting a  
16          bad -- the same bad results, so why not  
17          just redraw them my way and you will.  
18          You'll get good results. Also, up until  
19          yesterday I said the public hearing  
20          should start at 6 p.m., but based on  
21          what happened in Queens yesterday and  
22          today, which was past our bedtime, I  
23          think maybe you should consider holding  
24          between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., this way you  
25          can get more people to testify people,

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1  
2 people won't leave before you call the  
3 names because that's what happened in  
4 Queens, both guys saying today, we  
5 almost had to spend the night there,  
6 thanks to Youtube, if we had any more of  
7 that I would have wound up spending the  
8 night. Hopefully, you won't repeat what  
9 you did, hopefully and also if you want  
10 us to pre-register, tell us before, it's  
11 good advertising on the website, but you  
12 should contact us by e-mail if you  
13 didn't and then that that's your loss  
14 advertising, tell us -- mention on the  
15 website, contact us by e-mail, phone,  
16 fax, whatever, Twitter, whatever, etc  
17 and another I don't get is you gave us  
18 the opportunity to pre-register during  
19 the round two -- this is round two, but  
20 you didn't do it during round one,  
21 that's inconsistent, that also reminds  
22 me of the MTA, which stands for money  
23 thrown away. So all I'm saying is to  
24 Chair Walcott and its executive  
25 director, who could pass as a Shaft and



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1  
2 Superfly, who can pass from Gothic,  
3 Cambridge and Raymond, St. John,  
4 (inaudible) and comes back (inaudible).  
5 Take your time and do it right like the  
6 SOS band, that's all I'm asking you to  
7 do, take your time and do it right like  
8 the SOS band, I'm not asking you to  
9 revolve around me or any of us, but at  
10 least be considerate to us, okay, don't  
11 break up communities, keep them  
12 together. Like I said there's no reason  
13 why you can't go by the bus corridors,  
14 we have many bus corridors and all five  
15 boroughs, you know that, all you have to  
16 do is read the bus maps.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
18 testimony, sir.

19 MR. STANFORD: Yeah, thank you.

20 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay next up is Evan  
21 Casper.

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: Evan had to leave,  
23 but asked me to read his testimony --

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Sure, okay.

25 FEMALE SPEAKER: I have not read

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1  
2 this before, so just giving you a heads  
3 up -- um, so, hello my name is Evan  
4 Casper Futterman and I am a part of the  
5 Bronx Cooperative Development  
6 Initiative, a member of the Bronx White  
7 Coalition, I live at 55 East 190th  
8 Street, which is currently District 14.  
9 The current draft map is a reflection of  
10 who has power disproportionately, white  
11 people in Staten Island and who does not  
12 have power disproportionately,  
13 immigrants and low-income people of  
14 color in the Bronx. As a result, the  
15 draft map does not do what is necessary  
16 and hard about multi-racial democracy,  
17 which is to balance the forces of  
18 fairness against the exercise of raw  
19 power. The current draft map breaks up  
20 communities of interest across the  
21 borough from the west to the east,  
22 example one, every district in the Bronx  
23 is overpopulated and underrepresented  
24 and we are the only borough that is like  
25 that. This is a representation of the

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1  
2 kind of treatment that ensures the  
3 continued political and economic  
4 disenfranchisement of this borough  
5 relative to others. Since I live in  
6 this neighborhood, I'll use it as an  
7 example, almost every day I walk past  
8 the Kingsbridge armory, while walking to  
9 and from the subway, shopping on  
10 Kingsbridge, walking in St. James Park  
11 or going to, going on a stroll or jog  
12 around the reservoir, I attend local  
13 community meetings relating to the  
14 redevelopment of this gigantic and  
15 historic structure, these are the  
16 patterns and history of thousands of  
17 people in this neighborhood who have  
18 debated, fought and strategized for  
19 decades to bring this armory into  
20 productive use for the neighborhood and  
21 the city with scalpel-like precision.  
22 The current map moves the armory from  
23 District 14 where I live to District 11  
24 where my mother lives, my mother has no  
25 relationship to the Kingsbridge armory,

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1  
2 it is not a part of her history, her  
3 daily life or her civic concerns, the  
4 current map takes the future of the  
5 Kingsbridge armory away from the people  
6 who have worked for decades through many  
7 disagreements and challenges, and right  
8 as its future once again hangs in the  
9 balance, places it in the jurisdiction  
10 of people who have had no concern or  
11 relationship to it except passively  
12 through news reports. As a resident of  
13 the Bronx and District 14, I support the  
14 unity map plan, thank you.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
16 reading the testimony. Next order in  
17 person then we'll switch back to virtual  
18 is Joel Guerrero and then Linda Dix  
19 Walker and then Juan -- is it Nunez.

20 MR. GURRERO: Hi, my name is Joel,  
21 I live in Kingsbridge Road I represent  
22 District 14. Since the pandemic and  
23 even post pandemic, I've had the  
24 privilege to work with Purina Sanchez  
25 alongside small businesses in the

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1  
2 District 14 to revitalize the greenspace  
3 active -- greenspace, along with helping  
4 small businesses get themselves back in  
5 order, given that a lot of them suffered  
6 because of the pandemic. We realized  
7 that that was a moment for us to realize  
8 that building relationships with one  
9 another is going to be the most  
10 important thing heading forward and we  
11 spent the previous few months focusing  
12 on what we should do with the  
13 participatory budget and also how we can  
14 help tenants better through the programs  
15 that are available here in Kingsbridge  
16 area, like the Northwest Bronx Coalition  
17 and many other programs that are helping  
18 build more of that human relationship  
19 back into Kingsbridge Road -- um, I  
20 believe Jeffrey Donaldwitz alongside --  
21 um, the District 11 has a good will for  
22 what they'll be able to do for the  
23 Kingsbridge area, however we realized  
24 that um a lot of what the Kingsbridge  
25 improvement district that already

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1  
2 exists, covers, largely, Broadway from  
3 230th down to 238th and which makes  
4 sense because it does -- it does -- um,  
5 it was originated at District 11. Um,  
6 we fear that by bringing Kingsbridge 14  
7 -- I mean forgive -- district for --  
8 Kingsbridge Road to District 11 -- uh,  
9 we'll somehow have to rebuild new  
10 relationships and lose the old  
11 relationships that we've had with what  
12 we have already been building since the  
13 pandemic has started. We feel that it's  
14 important that we keep it strong because  
15 it's really hard to build relationships  
16 -- um, these days and -- uh, what we're,  
17 what we've realized is that although  
18 data and statistics does help us really  
19 see and actualize the problems that are  
20 existing on the ground floor --

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: We're sorry about  
22 that.

23 MR. GURERRERO: It's okay -- um, the  
24 overall sentiment of what's happening in  
25 Kingsbridge Road and District 14 is that

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1  
2 relationship-building and tackling  
3 problems face forward, like tenant  
4 rights, building relationships with  
5 landlords, helping small businesses work  
6 together, I say bring churches together,  
7 have the local parks work alongside with  
8 the council members and I say forgive me  
9 friends group and community  
10 organizations will be -- will be able to  
11 keep District 14 strong for heading  
12 forward, we hope that this redistricting  
13 doesn't pivot, jeopardize or have us  
14 restart and create new relationships  
15 with District 11, which we feel will be  
16 difficult because there's, a lack of a  
17 better word, not enough relationships in  
18 the past nor empathy within what's  
19 happening here compared to a place more,  
20 I say lucrative, like Riverdale. Once  
21 again, nothing against District 11, we  
22 just feel like the relationship we've  
23 built in District 14 has been very  
24 strong and we hope to keep it that way,  
25 thank you.

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1  
2 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
3 testimony, sir. Linda Dix Walker and is  
4 there Juan, looks like Nunez.

5 MR. NUNEZ: Good evening, everybody.  
6 My name is Juan Nunez. I am an  
7 organizer with the Northwest Bronx  
8 Community Clergy Coalition. I'm  
9 actually organizing around the  
10 Kingsbridge armory redevelopment, I  
11 don't know if people know, the northwest  
12 Bronx has been organizing around that  
13 development for over 30 years. In 2013  
14 we signed a community benefits agreement  
15 with that current developer (inaudible)  
16 right, that guaranteed local living wage  
17 jobs. It was a historic community  
18 benefits agreement, did y'all know that  
19 in December 2021 the EDC took back that  
20 development deal? Do you think it's a  
21 coincidence that they took Kingsbridge  
22 out -- they took the armory out of  
23 council District 14? It is not a  
24 coincidence, all right, that gentleman  
25 over there spoke about generational



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1  
2 wealth, that armory means generational  
3 wealth for so many people in that  
4 neighborhood, you heard what city  
5 councilwoman Verdina said, \$21,000  
6 median income, that armory can mean so  
7 much for that neighborhood and to divide  
8 it and put it in the district with a  
9 bunch of white folks in Riverdale and  
10 (inaudible), no disrespect, but that is  
11 not going to affect those folks up  
12 there, I respect them, but it's not  
13 going to affect them the way that it's  
14 going to affect our people here in  
15 District 14, you need to put the armory  
16 back into District 14 who has  
17 historically been organizing around the  
18 armory. I want people to know we're  
19 going to be hosting a rally on August  
20 25th in front of the armory to talk  
21 about the next phase in the  
22 redevelopment and what that means for  
23 the neighborhood, I want folks to come  
24 and join and find out what's going on.  
25 Whatever goes into that building is

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1  
2 going to affect that neighborhood and  
3 folks and residents in the neighborhood  
4 in the Bronx for generations and that's  
5 how we build generational wealth, with  
6 that building. You can actually bring  
7 your kids there today, you can go to the  
8 armory, they got tutoring there, hey,  
9 you can go apply for a job at the  
10 armory, hey, there's job training at the  
11 armory, hey, they're going to do  
12 construction of the armory, let's do the  
13 trainings inside the armory for the same  
14 construction that you're going to do in  
15 the armory and have local residents  
16 apply for these trainings, that's how  
17 you build generational wealth and that  
18 District 11 with folks in Riverdale is  
19 wrong. It's just wrong, that's not  
20 going to affect folks out there like it  
21 is here in District 14. So please  
22 remember to come on the 25th-- um, let  
23 me just quickly go over what I think we  
24 should do, we should read -- uh the  
25 commission should redraw Kingsbridge

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1  
2 Heights into council District 14, that's  
3 number one, keep the Kingsbridge city  
4 council district in District 14, keep  
5 the Bedford Park neighborhood together  
6 and see the 11 and limit the number of  
7 overpopulated city council districts in  
8 the Bronx. That's what we want, but  
9 also, most importantly, keep that armory  
10 in the district that has been fighting  
11 for it historically, District 14. I  
12 cannot believe that we're allowing  
13 Staten Island to do this to the rest of  
14 the city, it ain't right, so I hope to  
15 see you on the 25th, I hope you listen  
16 to the people, the community, this is so  
17 important to the Bronx again, it's not a  
18 coincidence that they took the armory  
19 out of that district at the time when  
20 we're going to relaunch the development  
21 of the armory, that was done on purpose  
22 and intentional -- intentionally, all  
23 right, I'll see you on the 25th, thank  
24 you.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your

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1  
2 testimony sir, -- uh, going virtual --  
3 uh, Eugene, is it Strupinsky.

4 MR. STRUPINSKY: Hello, how are you?

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: We can hear you.

6 MR. STRUPINSKY: Thank you very  
7 much, I'm sorry to yell, I'm speaking  
8 from the car -- uh, briefly, I'm calling  
9 in to speak about district 43 where I  
10 reside, that is Bay Ridge -- uh, I'm  
11 former a member of the CEC for District  
12 20. And I think it makes a lot of sense  
13 and I would also agree with everyone  
14 from Sunset Park that spoke about that  
15 in not chopping out Sunset Park and  
16 joining it uh with the community of  
17 different interests in Bay Ridge and to  
18 leave Bay Ridge primarily as it already  
19 is -- uh (inaudible) Heights in that  
20 part of south Brooklyn -- uh, which does  
21 encompass the same CEC -- uh, and a lot  
22 of other services, you know and frankly,  
23 you know, think of the people, I'll be  
24 brief, as my last pitch, think of all  
25 the other (inaudible) that happened and

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1  
2           that have not happened the (inaudible)  
3           district we just had strange multiple  
4           primaries and you know, if you want to  
5           keep some civic participation up, maybe  
6           don't mess with it so drastically -- uh  
7           I'm going to have had our state senate  
8           district, which commissioner was drawn,  
9           you know to move south of the Queens  
10          area, you know, then it would have made  
11          sense, maybe to also shift the uh  
12          council district, but that got undone  
13          and it would probably make sense to just  
14          leave, leave it alone and leave that  
15          area represented as it is and then leave  
16          Sunset Park alone, as they asked as  
17          well, so thank you very much.

18               CHAIR WALCOTT:   And thank you very  
19               much for your testimony -- uh, next  
20               virtually is Barbara E. Brown.   Barbara  
21               Brown?

22               MS. BROWN:   Good evening.

23               CHAIR WALCOTT:   Yes.   We can hear  
24               you.

25               MS. BROWN:   Yeah, my screen

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1  
2 disappeared, but anyway, but thank you  
3 for giving us this opportunity to -- uh,  
4 speak to you -- um I am the chairperson  
5 of an organization called the Eastern  
6 Queens Alliance -- uh, which is the  
7 federation of civics in southeast the  
8 Queens and we have been in existence for  
9 35-plus years. We represent uh  
10 districts -- uh, we represent  
11 communities in districts 27, 28 and 31.  
12 And we are advocating for keeping these  
13 -- uh, the city council districts  
14 largely intact as they are -- uh,  
15 communities south of Jamaica Avenue, for  
16 example, should remain in district --  
17 uh, 27 there are a few places where the  
18 Jamaica Avenue blocks were carved out  
19 and put in a district to the north --  
20 um, Rochdale Village, which is a  
21 middle-class housing complex, should be  
22 in one district. It makes no sense to  
23 try to split that the housing complex  
24 into more than one district, and as a  
25 longtime resident of resident of

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1  
2 district 31, the only change which  
3 should be made in that district is to  
4 improve all of JFK airport into the  
5 district -- uh, ten years ago when the  
6 line rejoined, drawing JFK was split  
7 into two districts, which made no sense  
8 the communities of Brookville, Laurelton  
9 and Rosedale and Springfield Gardens,  
10 Far Rockaway and the (inaudible) are all  
11 negatively impacted by JFK, they're all  
12 under the flight paths of JFK airport --  
13 um, the those communities also are  
14 impacted, particularly ones on the  
15 mainland side and impacted by the  
16 impoverished businesses coming out of  
17 JFK, trucks running through the streets  
18 day and night, parking all over the  
19 neighborhoods and it makes it -- it  
20 makes good sense to concentrate all of  
21 JFK in one district and makes it easier  
22 for the people who live in the those --  
23 in the communities -- uh, just north of  
24 JFK and south of JFK airport, makes  
25 sense to concentrate their -- uh,

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1  
2 representation in one district -- um,  
3 it's current JFK is currently  
4 represented by one congressman, one  
5 state senator and one assembly member,  
6 so also it should be under one council  
7 person, not two, as it is now -- um, the  
8 rest of the district 31 should remain  
9 intact, it is -- uh, largely a black  
10 descended -- uh, district and I'm saying  
11 black descended because there are people  
12 from -- there are black people from all  
13 over the diaspora living in the  
14 district, black people have been working  
15 very cohesively over these -- uh, 30,  
16 40, 50, years -- um, it's like the  
17 districts 31, 27 and 28 are largely  
18 democratic -- uh, districts and they are  
19 and the geography the cohesiveness,  
20 makes sense to keep those districts  
21 intact -- um, so we are advocating  
22 against any, really, attempt to split  
23 those districts. I know that there are  
24 limitations in terms of size, so some  
25 adjustments may need to be made -- uh,



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1  
2 particularly I think in district 28, but  
3 for the most part there is no reason to  
4 try to tackle with the lines drawn  
5 toward districts 27, 28 and 31 and  
6 definitely 31 needs to be kept intact,  
7 thank you.

8 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
9 your testimony. Next up, virtually  
10 Cynthia Felix Jeffers.

11 MS. JEFFERS: Yes, hi, good evening,  
12 my name is Cynthia Felix Jeffers and I  
13 am a life-long resident of Sunset Park,  
14 Brooklyn, which is part of city council  
15 38. I had the honor of working under  
16 (inaudible). I'm a educator and I am  
17 here today as a member of the Alliance  
18 for Puerto Rican Education and  
19 Empowerment to share my concerns  
20 regarding the redistricting commission's  
21 draft proposal maps that were released  
22 on July 15th. The maps, as proposed  
23 have many dramatic changes in my  
24 district and I am concerned about the  
25 impact they will have. The changes cut

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1  
2 Sunset Park in half and my half of  
3 Sunset Park, which is majority Latino  
4 area, will join us with Bay Ridge and  
5 that would create a majority white  
6 district, the other half, including my  
7 family and my churches would be combined  
8 with Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst in a  
9 majority Asian district. In addition  
10 (inaudible) would be removed from  
11 district 38, breaking up the industrial  
12 waterfront and will be joining district  
13 39, creating another majority white  
14 district. Our current district will  
15 spread out across three districts, one  
16 which would be majority Asian, two which  
17 would be majority white and none which  
18 would be majority Latino. District 38  
19 was actually created in 1989 by the  
20 Charter Revision Commission and was  
21 designed to be a Hispanic opportunity  
22 district. We know that how districts  
23 are drawn affects every political issue  
24 from economy to health care to public  
25 education and we have made so much

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1  
2 progress in the district 38 to get  
3 services and policies that have improved  
4 the quality of life in our district.  
5 These improved services, which include  
6 additional schools, health,  
7 transportation, and infrastructure will  
8 make it possible due to a united voice.  
9 These changes in the maps should that  
10 move the voting power of voters of color  
11 and Latino voters in our community and  
12 we worked so hard to gain those things.  
13 When you break up community, it takes  
14 away the community's ability to come  
15 together and advocate for important  
16 issues. We just had a very traumatic  
17 incident occur in our neighborhood, the  
18 subway shooting in April, the R line  
19 runs through the heart of our community  
20 and this traumatizing incident deeply  
21 affected our entire community and our  
22 current council person Alexa Realez  
23 worked with several community  
24 organizations including the Sunset Park  
25 family health center and our religious

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1  
2 leaders, who hosted their unity that  
3 brought us all together after that  
4 violent attack that left 29 people  
5 injured. Community leaders business  
6 owners and neighbors came out to support  
7 one another and together, we were able  
8 to address all fears and uncertainty.  
9 We were also one of the neighborhoods  
10 more severely impacted by COVID-19 in  
11 New York City and we have successfully  
12 advocated to reduce health inequities in  
13 our community that were exacerbated by  
14 the pandemic. All these accomplishments  
15 were made possible because we have one  
16 representative to that advocates for all  
17 in our community. The proposed methods  
18 create additional layers and simply  
19 creates confusion when we are still  
20 recovering from the effects of the  
21 pandemic and the tragic shooting, as it  
22 would remove several of the family  
23 health centers and our long-standing  
24 institution our (inaudible) will need  
25 perpetual help, it would also divide our

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1  
2 family business improvement district  
3 across two council districts, creating  
4 more bureaucracy and challenges to our  
5 small businesses. District 38 is  
6 diverse and beautiful, I know because  
7 I've lived here my entire life and my  
8 neighbors do everything to contribute to  
9 make our neighborhood better and we need  
10 to continue to enfranchise the residents  
11 who have been actively engaged in our  
12 community, not just disenfranchises it.  
13 The old map keeps my community all in  
14 one district and I am here because  
15 Latino representation matters and I want  
16 to insure the life we made similar to  
17 keep my communities of Sunset Park  
18 together. Although I understand that  
19 sometimes it is necessary or beneficial  
20 to create diverse districts, these new  
21 lines do not share as many common  
22 interests as do the residents of the  
23 current maps. There are many proposals  
24 to be considered that create a majority  
25 Asian district in south (inaudible) that

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1  
2 will not -- will not cut Sunset Park in  
3 half and would allow communities to get  
4 representatives of their choice. It is  
5 important that our communities have the  
6 opportunity to elect candidates that  
7 will have one voice and there are many  
8 alternative means of achieving compact,  
9 fair districts that keep communities of  
10 interest united. I thank you for  
11 listening to me today and ask that you  
12 consider the representative needs of the  
13 Sunset Park community, as I have just  
14 described, to the extent it is possible  
15 to do so without in any way diluting any  
16 minority voting power. Thank you again  
17 for your time.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
19 your testimony. We'll now go back in  
20 person and we'll start with is it Toyian  
21 Desson and then Margarita Rosario and  
22 then Michael Baptiste, is Toyian here,  
23 Margarita Rosario.

24 MS. ROSARIO: Good evening, my name  
25 is Margarita Rosario. I've been living

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1  
2 in the Bronx practically all my life,  
3 came from Puerto Rico and this is where  
4 we settled. I own a home not too far  
5 from here, so changing district when we  
6 have -- I have been fighting for this  
7 community since my young -- since my  
8 oldest son who is now 50 years old went  
9 to P.S. 86, I was a volunteer there and  
10 then became also to work in the Board of  
11 Education at one point, so I've been  
12 fighting for this community for years  
13 and I also fought for police against  
14 police brutality in the 90s. So I am  
15 here today to let you know that I will  
16 continue to fight and if we have to take  
17 change board members all of you guys and  
18 we will do that, so we are a community  
19 who are strong, we are community that we  
20 stick together and we do not allow  
21 people to come into our community and  
22 take it over like you guys been doing,  
23 thank you.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
25 testimony, Michael Pardus -- what

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1  
2 district you are being asked ma'am,  
3 what, which district do you represent?

4 MS. ROSARIO: 14.

5 CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay, thank you very  
6 much.

7 MR. PARDUS: Evening, my name is  
8 Michael Pardus, I'm with the Bronx  
9 Cooperative Bounty Initiative and we are  
10 part of the Bronx (inaudible) Coalition.  
11 One of the most egregious acts of the  
12 proposed plan is the overpopulation of  
13 Bronx districts. The overpopulation of  
14 Bronx districts fundamentally dilutes  
15 every part of voting power, voting  
16 rights and racial justice, it is the  
17 antithesis of the spirit of everything  
18 that democracy and a multiracial  
19 democracy is based on. When you take a  
20 borough-wide approach to looking at  
21 equity and power, it is clear that  
22 across the New York City districts that  
23 we are seeing, that we are looking at  
24 the favoritism of other districts for  
25 the sake of numbers and the watering



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1  
2 down of power for historical communities  
3 of interest and so one of those  
4 communities of interest that is  
5 important to think about are our small  
6 business owners on the heels of the  
7 pandemic, our council districts was a  
8 fundamental place that so many of our  
9 small business owners, the small  
10 businesses that employ your cousins,  
11 your friends, the people that you  
12 worship with, those small businesses  
13 that are at the heart of our economy  
14 that are overwhelmingly in the Bronx  
15 minority-owned businesses, they turn to  
16 their council members not only for  
17 advocacy, but for support for the  
18 economic development of our communities.  
19 By changing these districts without  
20 account of that interest, you are  
21 fundamentally hurting our ability to  
22 have economic democracy and to have  
23 capital that is readily accessible. In  
24 addition to that and I think, most  
25 importantly, the Kingsbridge armory

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1  
2 being separated from its historical  
3 community of interest is absolutely  
4 unacceptable. We know that the  
5 separation of communities has a deep  
6 history to colonialism, it has an even  
7 deeper history to redlining and it is  
8 fundamentally based on trying to make  
9 illegible our community's ability to  
10 organize and stay together. You hear  
11 tonight clearly -- tonight you hear  
12 clearly that no quantitative number and  
13 a law, nor no proposed maps are going to  
14 break the solidarity of our coalition  
15 and our people, but it is in the  
16 interest of democracy and the highest  
17 ideals of community power and governance  
18 that we rethink the overpopulation of  
19 our Bronx districts, that we rethink the  
20 breaking of community of interest like  
21 our small businesses that are at the  
22 heart of our economy and most  
23 importantly, the Kingsbridge armory as  
24 well articulated earlier, which could be  
25 an engine of shared wealth and a shared

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1  
2 future that's prosperous for all, I hope  
3 you all take in consideration these  
4 things and I hope that you all deeply  
5 hold a more equitable proposal for  
6 redistricting.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir,  
8 thank you for your testimony, next up  
9 is, is it Roshan Sankler and then is it  
10 Jarrod or Jarrett.

11 FEMALE SPEAKER: Sorry, my name was  
12 repeated, but Jina Talukdar will come up  
13 to speak and she will speak in Bangla  
14 and I'll translate. Thank you, my name  
15 is Jina Talukdar, I am a DRUM this is  
16 rising up and moving leader and also the  
17 residents of Parkchester District 18.  
18 We lived in -- we are centered with the  
19 Parkchester and we are centered at the  
20 Parkchester community. Parkchester  
21 means not only Parkchester, it's  
22 Westchester, north Bronx, Castle Hill  
23 and other areas. We want to continue  
24 this -- okay, we are the same culture --  
25 uh, same -- uh, we have the similar

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1  
2 shopping food and Baja and the cultural  
3 activities and -- uh the practices --  
4 uh, we want to continue this kind of  
5 image here, if we broke in -- uh, this  
6 will be difficult and it's a great  
7 struggle (inaudible) to continue this  
8 kind of unity cultural practices and  
9 other things, so that we want our  
10 community district. Thank you so much  
11 for listening to me.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you both  
13 for the testimony. Next up is Diane  
14 Sargent and then followed by, is it  
15 C-I-V-I-M-C-E-R -- uh, is Diane Sargent  
16 here -- um, C-E-V-I-M-C-E-R-O-L, it  
17 looks like W-A.

18 FEMALE SPEAKER: Olivarez.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Olivarez.

20 MS. OLIVAREZ: Good evening um I'm  
21 gonna keep this very brief because I  
22 know everybody wants to go home and some  
23 people have already spoken on this, but  
24 as a longtime resident of District 14, I  
25 wanted to speak about how the new

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1  
2 proposed maps would impact my  
3 neighborhood. For years I've been able  
4 to look out my window and see the  
5 Kingsbridge armory, right now the new  
6 map would cut the district off at  
7 Kingsbridge Road, moving the Kingsbridge  
8 armory out of District 14 where a lot of  
9 community engagement has already been  
10 completed over the past 30 years,  
11 Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Morris  
12 Heights and Fordham are all communities  
13 of common interest and the proposed  
14 lines would be, would divide these  
15 communities and further dilute Latino  
16 voting power by adding parts of  
17 Kingsbridge to District 11, which has a  
18 vastly different constituency, so it's  
19 with this in mind that I ask the  
20 commission to move the boundary on the  
21 new maps north to -- uh, 195th Street  
22 instead of keeping it at Kingsbridge  
23 Road and dividing these communities.  
24 With this, you would also be keeping the  
25 Kingsbridge armory in District 14, thank

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25

you --

CHAIR WALCOTT: Before you sit down because I know I didn't say your name correctly, would you be kind enough just to say your name so that way we --

MS. OLIVAERZ: Yes, my name is Saramar Olivarez.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay, thank you very much. Next up is Marshall Strawbridge, Marshall Strawbridge.

MR. STRAWBRIDGE: Good evening, thank you all for having us this evening, my name is marshall. I'm an organizer at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. NWBCC is a 47-year-old organization that has been organizing around issues like health, justice, education, housing and immigration alongside the 20 -- 20,000 families in the northwest Bronx and our 13 affiliate member institutions. We are also a core member of the Bronx-wide coalition, a network of organizations across the Bronx that are dedicated to

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1  
2 putting people at the decision-making  
3 table when it comes to making decisions  
4 about economic planning for a borough.  
5 The reason I'm here is to name one of  
6 the issues with the preliminary map,  
7 which is the borough-wide  
8 under-representation of folks in the  
9 Bronx, so the degree to which a single  
10 district is overpopulated, it is to that  
11 degree that the folks in that district  
12 are underrepresented and the Bronx is  
13 the only district in the entire, in the  
14 only borough in the entire city where  
15 all of our city council districts are  
16 underrepresented and so when we think  
17 about a lot of the issues that we  
18 organize around, like high rates of  
19 eviction, the Bronx has the poorest  
20 health outcomes and the highest rates of  
21 eviction, low unemployment, a lot of  
22 these economic outcomes are the result  
23 of folks not having a seat at the table  
24 and not having a say in the  
25 decision-making -- um, processes for our

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1  
2 city and for our borough and so the last  
3 thing that needs to be, last thing we  
4 need to be doing is diminishing the  
5 representation of these folks. We need  
6 to be enhancing -- uh, these folks  
7 voices beyond that -- uh the Kingsbridge  
8 armory being moved out of -- uh city  
9 council District 14 is an issue as well,  
10 but in addressing that issue, I would  
11 ask that the commission not just move  
12 the armory out, but move the entire  
13 Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood back  
14 into city council District 14 and to  
15 correct for the difference in population  
16 that that would create. I would ask  
17 that they not go back to the previous  
18 version of city council District 11 that  
19 included Wakefield, taking away from the  
20 West Indian populations in the central  
21 Bronx, but instead bring the southern  
22 boundary to include all of Bedford Park,  
23 which currently, the preliminary maps  
24 would cut Bedford Park off at 199th  
25 Street. So what they should do is



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1  
2 bring, bring that boundary down to like  
3 196th Street -- uh east of -- um, east  
4 of Grand Concourse and put all of that  
5 -- uh, Bedford Park neighborhood into --  
6 uh city council District 11, thank you.

7 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir, for  
8 your testimony. Next in person, is it  
9 Jermaine Peterson, after that Danielle  
10 -- Daniel Reynol.

11 MR. REYNOLDS: Hi -- um, Daniel  
12 Reynolds, I'm a resident of District 11  
13 --

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry, Reynolds.

15 MR. REYNOLDS: Reynolds, it's okay,  
16 I'm a resident of District 11. I've  
17 been a resident of District 14, 15 years  
18 before that. I second all the calls to  
19 not move anything related to Kingsbridge  
20 Heights or the Kingsbridge armory into  
21 District 11, diluting the power of those  
22 communities. I'm also going to read on  
23 behalf of Julie Colon who had to leave  
24 the meeting earlier and we had signed up  
25 to speak. So my name is Julie Colon and

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1  
2 I am the lead housing organizer of the  
3 Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy  
4 Coalition, a member of the Bronxwide  
5 coalition, we organize in districts 14  
6 and 15. I live at 671 Westchester  
7 Avenue, which is currently in district  
8 17. Tonight, I'm speaking to you as a  
9 lifelong Bronx resident, community  
10 member and organizer of the northwest  
11 Bronx community. I've been a tenant  
12 organizer for northwest Bronx for the  
13 last two years and have been in awe of  
14 the rich history of this community, my  
15 position gives me a special kind of  
16 privilege, I get to witness firsthand  
17 the resiliency, strength, courage, and  
18 bravery of community members when faced  
19 with issues like eviction, not getting  
20 access to good quality repairs, dealing  
21 with dilapidated apartments and  
22 buildings and facing landlord  
23 harassment. I've had the privilege of  
24 organizing with these folks and building  
25 power to change their material

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1  
2 conditions in their buildings and  
3 everyday lives. With that being said, I  
4 find it a horrible injustice to divide  
5 this community and separate Kingsbridge  
6 Heights neighborhoods by placing it in  
7 District 11, when it does not belong  
8 there. People living in Riverdale do  
9 not have the same issues as people  
10 living in Kingsbridge Heights. Every  
11 district in our borough is already  
12 overpopulated and underrepresented and  
13 we are the only borough that is like  
14 that. That means it's already hard  
15 enough to get the voices of people in  
16 the Kingsbridge Heights and Bedford Park  
17 community heard here, but we do it  
18 because we have always had each other to  
19 organize with because our communities  
20 understand each other and have the same  
21 needs. If the preliminary map passed  
22 the way it is, you're intentionally  
23 separating these communities and the  
24 power that they hold. Not only that,  
25 but it would also put the Kingsbridge

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1  
2 armory in District 11 which would  
3 honestly not make sense to me and many  
4 other community members. For over 20  
5 years this community has organized  
6 around the armory, it's not new, the  
7 armory is important to people of  
8 Kingsbridge Heights. So please move it  
9 into District 11. Please, so to move it  
10 into District 11 would not make sense  
11 and would be a serious slight to so many  
12 people who worked so hard to get the  
13 community input for what should be  
14 happening with the Kingsbridge armory.  
15 I strongly urge the commission to redraw  
16 the Kingsbridge Heights community into  
17 city council District 14 to keep the  
18 Bedford park neighborhood together in  
19 city council District 11 and to limit  
20 the number of overpopulated city council  
21 districts in the Bronx.

22 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir.  
23 Thank you and thank you for reading on  
24 behalf of your colleague. Next up is,  
25 is it A. Stevens -- no, that was the

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1  
2 councilmember, okay, right, Roxson --  
3 Roxanne Delgado.

4 MS. DELGADO: Yes, hello, my name is  
5 Roxanne Delgado. I'm the founder of  
6 Friends of Pelham Parkway, founded in  
7 2017. We -- uh, we have been using our  
8 greenway, Pelham Parkway, as a tool  
9 instrument to advocate for social and  
10 environmental justice and I'd like to  
11 say that I'm the only -- this is the  
12 only group founded by a woman of color  
13 in the entire city council District 13.  
14 (Inaudible) community of interest is  
15 Pelham Parkway, the greenway itself  
16 surrounded by the community that's also  
17 named Pelham Parkway. Pelham Parkway  
18 Park north and south have been intact  
19 for decades, but now the proposed map of  
20 CD13 carves out Pelham Parkway north in  
21 a very odd-shaped manner. As a result,  
22 the current map splits my communal  
23 interest into two different city council  
24 districts 13 and 15. Just recently,  
25 Pelham Parkway Friends helped Pelham and

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1  
2 the community, were participating -- in  
3 participating budgeting in CD13 where we  
4 actually gathered so many ballots, over  
5 at least 300 or 400 ballots, and we won  
6 our proposed capital project which was  
7 water fountains and greenway. Under  
8 this proposed map it would not be  
9 possible, so this actually harms us  
10 financially. We not only advocate for  
11 more funding for parks, we also advocate  
12 for equity in parks maintenance because  
13 greenways don't get the ongoing  
14 maintenance and especially parks and zip  
15 codes get more care to other parks and  
16 different zip codes, that's a fact.  
17 Unfortunately, our continued, but  
18 successful advocacy will not be possible  
19 if the parkway itself is divided and  
20 would deteriorate as it was in 2017,  
21 where the parkway was filled with trash  
22 and lack of maintenance and our efforts  
23 has basically made the parkway very  
24 green and clean, where people who visit  
25 our parkway said it's pretty good for

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1  
2 Bronx park it also moves over 1500 units  
3 of NYCHA housing, which includes Pelham  
4 Parkway Houses and Boston Road Plaza  
5 housing district. City council District  
6 15 is one of five city council districts  
7 city wide that has over 35 percent  
8 poverty rate. Adding more poor people  
9 into CD15 will not only overburden the  
10 office of CD15, but make scarce resource  
11 more scarce for the full, for parkway  
12 north section -- sorry and I would like  
13 to say -- um, actually prior electives  
14 have wanted to privatize Pelham Parkway  
15 houses or even sell it because they find  
16 Pelham Parkway to be a very -- uh,  
17 negative impact on the property values  
18 surrounding Pelham Parkway north, so  
19 Pelham Parkway has always been looked at  
20 as less desirable and now it's been  
21 carved out in a very, oddly shaped, like  
22 you would carve out cancer, which is  
23 very offensive for someone who loves  
24 Pelham Parkway. Lastly, Pelham Parkway  
25 north has a large -- Pelham Parkway

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1  
2 north and south has a large Mexican  
3 population. Many of our volunteers for  
4 five years are growing into 17, 18 of  
5 age, who will be eligible to be voting  
6 soon. This is a future voting block in  
7 Mexican population within CD13 and I  
8 think diminishing their voting bloc by  
9 putting them in 15 with large majority  
10 of Latinos includes Dominicans, Puerto  
11 Ricans, is unfair, I think there's no  
12 Mexican representative in either  
13 city-wide or state, local offices, so I  
14 think we should allow Pelham Parkway  
15 Mexican rolling bloc to continue to  
16 flourish and win. Within the  
17 generation, you'll see a Mexican elected  
18 or have the impact on future races, but  
19 give me at least one second because I am  
20 -- um, oh --

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Take your time.

22 MS. DELGADO: I'm so sorry -- um, I  
23 find interesting and I listened to a lot  
24 of testimony for the people who live in  
25 CD12. And I believe you me CD12 is an



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1  
2 amazing community they're very intact  
3 and they worked very hard, I know. I  
4 know that because I knocked on their  
5 doors. I would like to say interesting  
6 how this southern part CD13 was put on  
7 the north side of, CD13 so the south  
8 part of CD12 was pushed into CD13 north  
9 side and it actually increases the  
10 Democratic voters by over 25, 27 votes  
11 and I think it actually switches the  
12 election votes because in we're using  
13 the current map, the Republican nominee  
14 for governors or mayor's race won by 49  
15 percent and Democrat received 47. With  
16 these additional Democratic voters that  
17 actually the Democratic -- uh, current  
18 mayor Eric Adams, so I voted for  
19 actually wins 13, city 13. I think that  
20 we should stop putting politics above  
21 people's interest, community interests,  
22 I have nothing against city  
23 councilmember Margie Velazquez, but her  
24 career is not, takes a backseat to the  
25 community interests and if people want

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1  
2 to be elected, they should serve the  
3 community, not change the map in a way  
4 that benefits them, I'm not saying she  
5 was involved, but I'm just saying that  
6 we should put the community interest  
7 first and I'd like to say I thank you  
8 for your time. I mean, I was up all  
9 night listening to all your videos  
10 reading your transcript, all the public  
11 testimony, so I wrote this up at the  
12 last minute. I thank citizen union for  
13 all the data they put up to help me get  
14 this data, but I'd like to say I found  
15 it interesting that Van Nest, they only  
16 had three members who actually spoke  
17 regarding Van Nest, two of them spoke on  
18 behalf of uniting Van Nest, one spoke  
19 against it and she actually -- the one  
20 who spoke against it is actually a very  
21 active, strong member, who's very  
22 independent. The other two are not  
23 gonna say anything bad about it, but  
24 there's already talk that they plan to  
25 run for office, again we're putting

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1  
2 people's political ambitions over the  
3 community interests. I ask you please  
4 do not divide Pelham Parkway, it's --  
5 I'm the reason why I'm the only person  
6 of color who founded community --uh,  
7 founded group speaker because there's a  
8 lot of the systematic discrimination  
9 within District 11 that disempowers  
10 people. Now we have a group like myself  
11 by lots of Mexicans, Albanians, other  
12 people of color involved and we're  
13 trying to grow a political power voting  
14 bloc. Don't destroy what took us five  
15 years to build, please, I beg you not  
16 to. Thank you, thank you so much.

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
18 testimony, next -- uh, folks, to come up  
19 is Robin Roland, Liz Thompson and  
20 Crystal Reyes, is Robin here, are you  
21 Robin?

22 MS. ROLAND: Hello, my name is Robin  
23 Roland. I've been in District 14 for  
24 half my life, I'm a lifelong Bronx  
25 resident and I'm here to strongly urge

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1  
2 the commission to not go along with the  
3 proposed plan for District 14,  
4 particularly with regard to the armory.  
5 I live blocks from the armory and I've  
6 always thought that that could be  
7 something could be done there, but many  
8 -- much of my life I wasn't very  
9 political. During the pandemic it  
10 became very clear to me that I must be  
11 involved in my community. I kept going  
12 outside my community for services for  
13 this, for that, but when I could not go  
14 out of my community because of  
15 transportation, et cetera, I realized  
16 that I must be more involved, I must be  
17 part of revitalizing what's here and we  
18 have a lot of resources here. I became  
19 involved with the Northwest Bronx  
20 Community and Clergy Coalition because  
21 of, I heard that the armory, there was  
22 the chance for the armory to be  
23 developed and I was excited -- um, at  
24 the aftermath of the pandemic for the  
25 first time, although the neighborhood is

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1  
2 not a rich neighborhood, it has economic  
3 challenges, it became more deteriorated,  
4 I see people laying down on the streets  
5 they're clusters of homeless,  
6 drug-addicted people just creating  
7 encampments in various parts of the  
8 neighborhood, so there's opera --  
9 opportunities for revitalizing this area  
10 and the armory would be a great place  
11 for that. Putting the armory in  
12 District 11 in a community that has a  
13 lot of economic vitality -- um political  
14 influence, would be a slap in the face,  
15 this is like what -- this is like what  
16 we do to the world -- seeing third world  
17 countries, you keep taking the resources  
18 out of it that's right in front of them,  
19 that's like having a gold --- that's  
20 like in Africa you have diamonds and  
21 gold and the people are not benefiting  
22 from it, the people outside are  
23 benefiting for, benefiting from it, why  
24 are we doing this here? This is New  
25 York City, this is the richest city, one

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1  
2 of the richest cities in the world, a  
3 vital city, but yet you, but yet we  
4 allow the Bronx to be stepped on. The  
5 Bronx is like, we just kicked them  
6 aside. The poor people of the Bronx,  
7 the working-class people of the Bronx,  
8 there are rich areas of the Bronx, but  
9 what about us, why do we keep ignoring  
10 the disenfranchised, the economically  
11 disenfranchised people. When we try to  
12 get together and work together to build  
13 our communities, we get kicked aside,  
14 you put us in huge groups of political  
15 bloating -- voting blocs, so that we  
16 can, so that we, our voices are more  
17 diluted. Why do we keep doing this, is  
18 a cliché and it would be an  
19 embarrassment it's disrespectful to me  
20 that I, in my community and all of us in  
21 our community, are treated this way, the  
22 armory is right there, right there but  
23 yet we can't have a voice in what's done  
24 to it, done with it. We can't um take  
25 uh have agency in our lives why, why;

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don't allow this and shame on you if you  
do, thank you.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
testimony -- uh, next up is Liz Thompson  
and then Crystal Reyes; Liz Thompson?

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, it is.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Hi, take your time.

MS. THOMPSON: It's Elizabeth  
Thompson, okay, they put it down as Liz,  
but and it's called -- I am called Ms.  
Liz of the Bronx, okay, I am a helper  
for everybody in the Bronx all over,  
I've been fighting to keep the Bronx --  
you can hear me?

CHAIR WALCOTT: You have to put the  
mic up.

MS. THOMPSON: I've been fighting to  
keep the Bronx, to make sure that  
they're the best Bronx in the borough in  
the world. I go from place to place, I  
see what we need, I'm on Claflin Avenue  
and -- um, district, was is it 11, I had  
put in for that park, for a park three,  
four years ago, I'm still waiting for a

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1  
2 bathroom. We haven't had a bathroom in  
3 that park for over 10 years and now  
4 y'all want to take my armory that I've  
5 been fighting for something for our  
6 children, this is wrong, this is not  
7 right. Our children need something and  
8 don't take our armory and give it to my  
9 district, nobody help me when I -- when  
10 Kingsbridge Heights was closed or  
11 getting to be closed, I asked for help,  
12 so they won't be closed. Nobody helped  
13 me and now you're doing the same thing.  
14 Come on, this is not right, this is not  
15 right and we might need help, yes, but  
16 this is the wrong way and how long this  
17 trend, was it zoning or whatever, is  
18 supposed to last me. And Al Chapman  
19 went to quite a few and tell them that  
20 we don't need no -- um, lining or  
21 whatever you call it you have to excuse  
22 me, I'm not political really -- uh, I'm  
23 really not political, if you want to sit  
24 me on the side and you say something  
25 wrong and I beat you like your mother or



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1  
2 your grandmother use to say. Me and  
3 Gardenia walk up and down our block  
4 pulling up our children's pants, we take  
5 care of ours. This is wrong what you're  
6 doing. I don't want to say too much  
7 because I go off the record, then my  
8 people tell me, Liz. So I appreciate  
9 y'all listening to me, don't do this,  
10 please don't do this -- oh, the  
11 reservoir, we wanted quite a few things  
12 about the reservoir, when it was Pauline  
13 and whatever avenue went up, we fight  
14 and people take things. We win the  
15 battle and they don't give it to us, so  
16 please, I'm having a little knee  
17 problem, but, hey, I made it today,  
18 thank you very much.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
20 testimony, thank you for your testimony,  
21 Crystal Reyes.

22 MALE SPEAKER: Hello again, Crystal  
23 had to leave, but I have her paper here  
24 on her behalf. So good evening,  
25 everyone. My name is Crystal Reyes.

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1  
2 I'm a resident of city council District  
3 12. I'm the co-organizing director at  
4 the Northwest Bronx Community Clergy  
5 Coalition, I've been working with young  
6 people across the Bronx for close to 15  
7 years now and my commitment to them is  
8 to ensure their voices are elevated and  
9 that they have access to the resources  
10 they need to succeed. It's a shame that  
11 many of our youth are often excluded  
12 from these processes when they are  
13 clearly impacted by these kinds of  
14 decisions. You have to do better to  
15 make sure this information is accessible  
16 to all community members. Today, I'm  
17 here to say that the new redistrict maps  
18 continue to create racially unbalanced  
19 values that will negatively impact  
20 black, brown and Asian communities. It  
21 keeps, the maps divide communities that  
22 have historically shared values and  
23 needs. You as a commission have a  
24 responsibility to carry out a process  
25 that results in providing communities

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1  
2 with fair and just access to resources  
3 and opportunities, especially because  
4 over the last two years our communities  
5 have been facing a global pandemic that  
6 only worsened systemic racial  
7 inequities. I request that this  
8 commission stop manipulating our  
9 district maps. Our people deserve equal  
10 representation and must distribute our  
11 population equally in the proposed maps.  
12 The Kingsbridge community will be losing  
13 a vital asset to their community. It is  
14 important that the community, that that  
15 community that has historically been at  
16 the forefront of redeveloping the  
17 community's armory keep, be kept in city  
18 council District 14 and not in city  
19 council District 11, which is  
20 drastically different demographic and  
21 socioeconomically, which is drastically  
22 different demographically approaching --  
23 uh, economically and therefore have  
24 different needs. In the proposal, you  
25 divide a lasting community, which only

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1  
2 minimizes the voices and values of a  
3 predominantly black community you must  
4 also keep city council District 12  
5 together, especially to provide young  
6 people in this district the resources  
7 they need in their schools. The last  
8 thing I will share is that our  
9 communities cannot continue to be  
10 divided and overpopulated and  
11 disenfranchised, thank you.

12 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you again  
13 -- uh, Ramon Mendez.

14 MR. MENDEZ: Hi; good evening, folks  
15 --uh, my name is Ramon Mendez and I've  
16 been a community organizer with the  
17 Northwest Bronx Community Clergy  
18 Coalition for the last five years. I've  
19 seen firsthand the issues tenants in the  
20 Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood have  
21 had to put through during this changing  
22 and difficult times and as it is,  
23 renting tenants aren't being heard about  
24 the needs they have and what they want  
25 to see happen in their community. They

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1  
2 have stood by through wrong, thick and  
3 thin, have called this community home  
4 all these years and now certain parts of  
5 it are being taken away from it, by  
6 expropriating the Kingsbridge armory  
7 from city council 14 into city council  
8 11 is an example of how the new lines  
9 will rob the communities that have  
10 organized around it for decades of a  
11 voice and quite literally of a vote of  
12 what would be made of it, giving a new  
13 community the upper hand on what goes  
14 into the armory is not only  
15 undemocratic, but straight up  
16 disrespectful to us in the Kingsbridge  
17 Heights neighborhood. If you're  
18 allowing Staten Island to do what  
19 they're doing, I wonder if you'd also  
20 allow the Bronx to do the same, but I  
21 don't think so. We urge you to redraw  
22 the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood and  
23 the Kingsbridge armory into District 14  
24 as well as keeping our neighbors in  
25 Bedford Park together in council

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District 11. Our communities deserve to be heard and our communities deserve to stay together, thank you.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, sir, is it Cedric Fergus?

MR. FERGUS: Yes.

CHAIR WALCOTT: You're going to have to raise it up higher.

MR. FERGUS: A little higher? There you go. Hello commission, you hear me, all right, great, thank you. It's a pleasure being here too -- um, my name is Cedric Fergus and I've resided in northeast Bronx in District 12 on and off for 40 years and I live in Co-Op City with my beautiful wife Lisa Bentham Fergus, Lisa. Anyway my parents Joseph and Julie Fergus, bought a house on (inaudible) Avenue down the block from Austin Michael in 1972. We were one of the first black and West Indian families in the neighborhood, two of my brothers served in the army, my late big sister also served, my little sister got

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1  
2 college degrees and me, two masters, my  
3 father worked as a custodian, stockman  
4 at Truman High School for many years and  
5 was an army veteran for 27 years, my mom  
6 worked in the housekeeping aide at  
7 Einstein hospital for years. I'm a  
8 graduate of Dewitt Clinton High School  
9 with honors, Lehman College 83.95  
10 undergrad economics and finance,  
11 master's in elementary education,  
12 Brooklyn College masters in phys ed. In  
13 2018 I retired, 28 years a teacher from  
14 the south Bronx, new basketball coach,  
15 I'm telling you all this because Gun  
16 Hill, the Valley, Eastchester, should  
17 never leave District 12. We are  
18 fighting to make the neighborhood  
19 better, safer and educated, we just got  
20 over after 20 years the northeast YMCA  
21 behind -- behind -- um, Spellman High  
22 School and Beacon Program at the  
23 numerous years at Truman High School.  
24 We could not have done any of this  
25 without the neighborhood being together.

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1  
2 Please remember our kids in District 12  
3 who are going to the same schools in the  
4 district for many years, many years.  
5 Simply keep District 12 and northeast  
6 Bronx together, let's address the issues  
7 of crime, housing, health, care,  
8 speeding, poverty, jobs, school budget  
9 cuts, keeping the neighborhood clean and  
10 dealing with the over parking of trucks.  
11 Keep all the districts together, thank  
12 you very much.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you very  
14 much.

15 MR. FERGUS: It's a pleasure.

16 CHAIR WALCOTT: And next up, Lisa  
17 Benton Fergus and then following Lisa  
18 Benton Bergus, we'll have Christian  
19 Ramos and then from there we'll go to --  
20 uh, it looks like M, (inaudible),  
21 Margaret it says, I'll get to it in a  
22 second, yes.

23 MS. FERGUS: Good evening, everybody  
24 and I'm so glad to see the turnout that  
25 appeared at Lehman College for today. I



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1  
2 am a resident of District 12. I have  
3 been here, this is my anniversary, this  
4 is my 63rd year living in the northeast  
5 Bronx, thank you. My -- I just  
6 recently, unfortunately had to sell my  
7 mother's house, she was on East 216th  
8 Street, but the good thing was, she  
9 lived to be 101, so she lived here for  
10 62 years. I know she would be very sad  
11 right now to see what is happening. In  
12 July, we had Alzheimer's day for  
13 Olinville. Not only did the people of  
14 Olinville show up, but the same  
15 neighborhoods that you're trying to  
16 redistrict came. We came together,  
17 there was no incidents, people were  
18 happy to see one another and we just had  
19 a really good time. I am very sad  
20 because, like I said, I have been here  
21 63 years. I formerly was from Harlem,  
22 New York and to see what is happening in  
23 my Bronx, not only do I live in the  
24 northeast Bronx, I'm currently in Co-Op  
25 City, but I used to teach in the south

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1  
2 Bronx District 9, so I have a love of  
3 the Bronx, period. I would love for  
4 something to be done for the armory, for  
5 the whole Bronx not just for one  
6 particular district. My question that I  
7 want all of you to think of on the  
8 panel, and then I will be finished, is  
9 that how this is going to impact our  
10 youth. If you divide us again, they're  
11 already having problems with this  
12 neighborhood getting this and that,  
13 neighborhood getting that and they're  
14 fighting one another. We have to think  
15 of our youth. Please, I'm begging you,  
16 please think of our youth. United we  
17 stand and divided we fall. Have a good  
18 evening.

19 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you for your  
20 testimony. Christina Ramos.

21 MS. RAMOS: Good evening, ladies and  
22 gentlemen of the commission, I'm from  
23 Ecuador. Ecuador represents a  
24 Kingsbridge Merchant Association, more  
25 than 250 businesses from Grand Concourse

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1  
2 to Sedgwick Avenue, sorry for my  
3 English. That was hard when I came to  
4 the Kingsbridge, seeing my Spanish  
5 people and I'm saying, let me open my  
6 store still 20 years later, I started in  
7 Kingsbridge when I was 22, pretty young.  
8 Open a business opened my eyes to the  
9 world, living in the Bronx, tried to get  
10 apartment, but today 20 years later, to  
11 see if I have in front of me, in front  
12 of us as the merchants do, today I have  
13 to (inaudible) from them, from the  
14 business owner, from the big one, to  
15 your own, to Grand Concourse or we have  
16 a supermarket, we have restaurants, we  
17 have a small mom-and-pop stores and  
18 today I would like to ask him why my  
19 job, my job to open association I make a  
20 business owner working together for the  
21 past 10 years, making meetings, that was  
22 really hard for business owner, really  
23 hard to put a business together in the  
24 neighborhood, even that was hard for me  
25 to put a Christmas lights. Now gonna be

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1  
2 really hard and more because right now I  
3 receive and I feel sad as a business  
4 owner that I gotta meet another district  
5 leader that now we already have a  
6 community board seven and eight to knock  
7 the door and then I have to go to  
8 another community board to say please  
9 give me a permission to do this, to do  
10 this to, so that in the neighborhood,  
11 it's really hard for us as a business  
12 owner to improve association inside, we  
13 already have a lot of package of  
14 problems that we already bring the  
15 homework to our councilman Pierrina  
16 Sanchez, our senate who is in the  
17 neighborhood, now I gotta bring the same  
18 package to the other side. I feel that  
19 this is the divided, I don't want to  
20 say, sounds like political but I have to  
21 say I'm an honest person. From the  
22 beginning all these people that you see  
23 in here, we know each other, community  
24 boards, they know us, the northwest  
25 coalition, they know us as a merchant,

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1  
2 you see then they are not only our  
3 community is our customers that we see  
4 it every day 7/24 in a pandemic or no  
5 pandemic, all of them they have families  
6 and now we have to understand and  
7 please, I could ask him (inaudible) this  
8 is our position for a couple years, I  
9 would say a couple years for me because  
10 you just heard they say 60 something  
11 year, 50 something, I am the baby in the  
12 neighborhood, right, but at the same  
13 time I want to see my family grow in  
14 this area. When I just gonna put a  
15 sample when I do some festival and I  
16 need the permit, I got to go to  
17 community board all the way to  
18 Riverdale, I don't even -- in the  
19 beginning of course, I don't even know,  
20 I'm going to take a bus, walking around,  
21 doing some permit for Cambridge Road  
22 between Jerome Morris or Jerome,  
23 Aquaduc, so I only I ask him (inaudible)  
24 don't divide us. We everybody in  
25 Kingsbridge, we know each other with my

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1  
2 mom and papa store. We don't need to go  
3 to all the way to Riverdale, they have  
4 totally different -- all these  
5 businesses come together, they know  
6 together Spanish, Afro-Americans,  
7 Latinos, Italians, we got a lot of even  
8 Bangladesh, you already know we know  
9 each other already, how you guys gonna  
10 come and say we got a new map 10 years  
11 of course, every 10 years all this  
12 happened. I didn't even know that that  
13 even happened, maybe one week before  
14 that, we don't even know, so only as a  
15 business owner and boys of my merchants  
16 and boys on the merchant business owner,  
17 they are there for years. Actually they  
18 don't even close, right now we're still  
19 working in Kingsbridge. Please think  
20 about it what you guys doing, put in  
21 your head -- your hands, sorry my  
22 English again, your hand in your heart  
23 and your mind and do the best solution  
24 for us, thank you, thank you so much.

25 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much

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for your testimony, I have Margaret and  
it's G-R-O -- looks like K-E --

FEMALE SPEAKER: She's no here.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay, thank you.  
Sandra Lobo.

MS. LOBO: Good evening.

CHAIR WALCOTT: Good evening.

MS. LOBO: My name is Sandra Lobo, I  
have lived in the Bronx for most of my  
life and I raised my two children in  
District 11. I'm also the executive  
director of the Northwest Bronx  
Community and Clergy Coalition which is  
a member-led grassroots organization  
that works for racial justice and  
economic democracy. We support  
community members to work on issues that  
impact their lives, including improving  
access to health care, preserving safe,  
affordable housing, fighting for  
equitable community and economic  
development, supporting local businesses  
and organizing for quality and safe  
education, we represent a base of about

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1  
2 5,000 families and include affiliate  
3 organizations including New Day Church,  
4 Mekong NYC, Fort Independence Park  
5 Neighborhood Association, Fordham  
6 University, Manhattan College, St.  
7 Simon stock church, Fordham Manor  
8 church, Sisters and Brothers United,  
9 Christ Church Riverdale, Our Lady of  
10 Angels church, Mary Mitchell Family and  
11 Youth Center and United Outreach  
12 Ministries. We are a trusted  
13 47-year-old organization that has been  
14 working to support and develop the  
15 leadership of disenfranchised and  
16 marginalized residents in the Bronx.  
17 We've been fighting for funding  
18 investment and representation since the  
19 days of redlining and the burning of  
20 buildings by landlords for insurance  
21 money. We mainly work with those  
22 residents who have been silenced,  
23 forgotten and marginalized by government  
24 landlords, banks and other private  
25 interests. We are also a part of the



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1  
2 Bronx-wide Coalition, made up of dozens  
3 of community, faith and labor  
4 organizations that are working to bring  
5 much-needed resources into our borough  
6 the proposed district max -- maps will  
7 over-populate the Bronx overall and  
8 underrepresent us in the city council  
9 districts. I have a few major points I  
10 want to convey, which would be  
11 devastating to our people if they were  
12 to happen. The Kingsbridge armory has  
13 already been shared, is the world's  
14 largest armory, currently located in  
15 District 14. The Northwest Bronx  
16 Community Clergy Coalition has been  
17 organizing to redevelop the Kingsbridge  
18 armory for over 25 years, we have fought  
19 for local small businesses, for local  
20 workers, for young people and residents  
21 to ensure that this community asset  
22 actually goes to those who live in the  
23 community and beyond the suggested maps  
24 would be, placing the armory in District  
25 11, placing decision making around this

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1  
2 community asset to representatives and  
3 community that is disconnected from the  
4 project. This is an asset that has the  
5 potential of transforming one of the  
6 most impacted neighborhoods for the  
7 better or for the worse and the decision  
8 making should be kept in District 14,  
9 where these residents live. Related to  
10 this, the district (inaudible) separate  
11 the commercial quarter of District 14  
12 which we heard from the vice president  
13 of the merchant association, Christian  
14 Ramos before. This commercial quarter  
15 of District 14 is located on Kingsbridge  
16 Road and Jerome Avenue, right across the  
17 street from the Kingsbridge armory.  
18 This map literally splits the commercial  
19 district in half. On one side of the  
20 street are some businesses that will be  
21 in District 11 and on the other side of  
22 the street there will be businesses in  
23 District 14. I think we all know how  
24 decimated small businesses were during  
25 the pandemic. We've been organizing,

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1  
2 supporting the Kingsbridge merchant  
3 association for a long time, to help  
4 bring resources to the area working in  
5 coordination to secure investment and  
6 funding. Splitting this very active  
7 commercial district in half will have a  
8 very serious, negative impact on these  
9 businesses. Having to coordinate across  
10 districts would ultimately undermine  
11 this community of interest. Related to  
12 this, the Kingsbridge Heights  
13 neighborhood has been proposed to be in  
14 District 11. It's important to note  
15 that the Kingsbridge Heights  
16 neighborhood is predominantly black and  
17 Latino, with low income and working  
18 class people who struggle to survive  
19 every day working two or three jobs to  
20 put food on the table, pay rent and  
21 navigate all the other expenses to  
22 survive. Most residents in District 14  
23 pay more than half of their income on  
24 rent. We have some of the highest rates  
25 of COVID infections hospitalizations and

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1  
2 deaths and have had the highest rates of  
3 evictions in the entire city. This is a  
4 community that shares a history of  
5 struggle, advocating for much-needed  
6 resources and has been able to secure  
7 many of them because of their  
8 representation and their shared  
9 community of interest. District 11 is  
10 made up of predominantly whither and  
11 wealthier neighborhoods that do not  
12 share the same history or experience  
13 they do. They are not impacted by the  
14 same issues and have at times advocated  
15 against the resources that District 14  
16 desperately needs, including homeless  
17 shelters and supportive housing.  
18 Lumping in Kingsbridge Heights into  
19 District 11 would only undermine their  
20 representation. I could go on and on  
21 about District 11, 12 and 15 where we  
22 also organized but there's limited time.  
23 I will include these in my written  
24 testimony, but the most important piece  
25 that I want to communicate to you is to

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1  
2 respect all residents despite their  
3 race, their income level or perceived  
4 political power. Our democracy feels  
5 more and more at risk every day and  
6 ensuring that you honor those who have  
7 advocated together to overcome shared  
8 challenges by keeping together is  
9 essential. Distribute the population  
10 equitably across the boroughs and ensure  
11 that those most marginalized.  
12 Historically will not be once again  
13 marginalized I respectfully ask that you  
14 take into account the natural geographic  
15 barriers on the maps and the social  
16 cohesion and shared communities of  
17 interest that folks have already shared  
18 with you this evening. Do not let the  
19 Bronx, the borough that has been one of  
20 the most disinvested, in  
21 disenfranchised, redlined and  
22 marginalized become once again minimized  
23 in terms of representation at a time  
24 when we are now being pushed out and  
25 displaced. I'm hoping that you all here

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1  
2 you are all here because you believe in  
3 democracy and equitable representation.  
4 I trust that is why you're sitting at  
5 that table. I ask that you help create  
6 maps that build our democracy and do not  
7 undermine. Those most impacted by  
8 inequality and disenfranchisement, thank  
9 you.

10 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
11 your testimony. Next up Toby Buford,  
12 then Rod Saunders and Eddie -- um,  
13 Kestig, if not Shirley Saunders. I'm  
14 sorry, who are you, so I can check it  
15 off?

16 MR. SAUNDERS: Yes, good evening, my  
17 name is Rod Saunders.

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Oh, okay, perfect,  
19 thank you.

20 MR. SAUNDERS: I want to thank you  
21 for allowing me to give my testimony.  
22 This evening, this is about council  
23 District 12. First and foremost, I want  
24 to be clear, I am firmly in support of  
25 keeping the boundaries of District 12

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1  
2 exactly where they are and have been for  
3 the past 30 years. I have been  
4 fortunate enough to have been elected to  
5 serve for 11 consecutive years in  
6 community District 11 school board, I've  
7 served five years on the board of the  
8 Campaign for Fiscal Equity and I'm  
9 currently a member of the River Bay  
10 board of directors, who oversees the  
11 policies and fiduciary responsibilities  
12 of Co-Op City. Most of community school  
13 District 11 schools are within the  
14 boundaries of council District 12,  
15 however, the community school district  
16 actually encompasses council districts  
17 11, 13, 15 and 18, all north Bronx  
18 communities, all with different needs  
19 and perspectives, especially when  
20 looking at the educational needs of many  
21 of our elementary, middle and high  
22 schools within their districts. The  
23 current outreach of our current council  
24 District 12 for our students, have been  
25 unprecedented, council District 12 at

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1  
2 the council District 12 is ethnically  
3 diverse middle class population has  
4 pocket of residents requiring more  
5 financial assistance than most, while  
6 there is a fairly large population  
7 consisting of one, two and three-family  
8 prior private dwellings. There's also a  
9 fairly large number of residents  
10 residential multiple dwellings and of  
11 course our very own 800-pound gorilla  
12 sitting at the edge of the northeast  
13 Bronx, Co-Op City. The advocacy by the  
14 residents of District 12 is unique. The  
15 needs of District 12 community are  
16 championed by many sources within the  
17 district, historically the coalition of  
18 churches, the community-based  
19 organizations community board 12 and the  
20 45th, 47th Precinct council have worked  
21 very well together with every, worked  
22 very well together. Co-Op City will not  
23 be adversely affected by the proposed  
24 new council District 12 map, however we  
25 can appreciate the concern that the



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1  
2 residents of the Gun Hill Houses or  
3 constituents who reside east of White  
4 Plains Road will fare as the proposed  
5 new map will exclude them from the  
6 representation that has provided them  
7 with, the representation which has  
8 finally brought them a sense of  
9 meaningful representation. I bring this  
10 to the redistricting community's  
11 attention simply because whether we were  
12 discussing legislative issues, which  
13 shaped the rules and regulations that  
14 all New York City must adhere to the  
15 resourcefulness of our council members  
16 as our educational partners, or the  
17 multitude of quality of life issues  
18 which encompass every council district  
19 neighborhood by neighborhood and block  
20 by block, the constituents of an elected  
21 representative are best served by an  
22 individual who has complete knowledge of  
23 their area and who has demonstrated that  
24 they can deliver what is required. This  
25 could not have been more evident than

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1  
2 during the height of the COVID-19  
3 pandemic than with the empathy for all  
4 of the districts, which was clearly  
5 shown by councilmember Kevin Reily and  
6 the hard-working members of his  
7 dedicated staff, as they work to make  
8 certain that food, personal protective  
9 equipment, testing sites were delivered  
10 to the communities that he represents.  
11 Council District 12 has basically  
12 maintained the same boundary line since  
13 it was rejoined during the 1990s and  
14 co-ops as a resident of call of city in  
15 the 1980s when Co-Op City was  
16 gerrymandered, it was represented by --  
17 by a councilmember representing  
18 Riverdale. All I can say is, thank  
19 goodness for the 1990 census and the  
20 Voting Rights Act because Co-Op City --  
21 because the change worked out for Co-Op  
22 City very well and we're very well  
23 presented by councilmember Riley and his  
24 wonderful staff, based upon Co-Op City's  
25 past experience it is my opinion that

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1  
2 the removal of an area from the council  
3 district to ensure the probability of  
4 fair representation is understandable  
5 because that's one of the objectives of  
6 the Voting Rights Act, the present  
7 proposed, proposal to delete blocks from  
8 the 12th council district only, only to  
9 assure blocks, only to ensure the  
10 population increase is less than 3  
11 percent, should not be determining  
12 factor. I'm certain that the  
13 constituents who are being considered to  
14 be removed from the 12th District are  
15 hoping that the redistricting committee  
16 has a change of mind and heart, clearly  
17 --

18 CHAIR WALCOTT: Can you start to  
19 wrap up, sir?

20 MR. SAUNDERS: Okay.

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you.

22 MR. SAUNDERS: Clearly, the affected  
23 residents are have -- are trusting that  
24 the, in the final analysis through a  
25 district commission will come to the

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fair conclusions that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, thank you.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you very much as well is Eddie -- um, I'm having trouble reading the last name, looks like a C-U-S-T -- oh, you right here, I'm sorry.

MS. SAUNDERS: My name is Shirley Saunders, district --

CHAIR WALCOTT: Oh, okay, you're Shirley Saunders, okay.

MS. SAUNDERS: Yes, I will be brief. You heard my husband, but what I'd like to ask is that you consider keeping Evander Childs in our district, as well as the Gun Hill Houses, please, we have worked with these people over the years and they're very passionate about their children and the education they're getting as well as the activities they're getting. Please consider this, don't let this go, it's a good, it's a good situation now and it can be better.

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Please help us help our future children,  
thank you.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you very  
much for your testimony, Maria  
Fernandez?

MS. FERNANDEZ: Yes, hi --

CHAIR WALCOTT: How are you?

MS. FERNANDEZ: Good evening,  
saludos, my name is Maria Teresa  
Mariposa Fernandez. I am a part of the  
Point CDC a member of the Bronx-wide  
coalition. I live on Pelham Parkway  
south District 13. I'm a lifelong  
Bronx, Afro-black, Puerto Rican native  
New Yorker, I wish to speak in support  
of various communities who are  
struggling to remain intact as  
historically united communities based on  
common needs challenges, struggles and  
interests. As working class people of  
color, I wish to speak and stand for the  
Bronx, which every district of which is  
overpopulated and underrepresented. As  
an educator for more than 30 years, the

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1  
2 people. That I serve primarily are  
3 young people I speak for the youth, my  
4 students who I teach here at Lehman  
5 College in the City University of New  
6 York will be negatively impacted by the  
7 new map that separates them from each  
8 other. After this unprecedented  
9 pandemic, the last thing we, as  
10 historically harmed, historically  
11 disenfranchised and historically  
12 marginalized communities need, is a new  
13 map that separates us, that minimizes  
14 our voices and our political power as  
15 BIPAC people. The Kingsbridge armory is  
16 an asset that should remain in District  
17 14 and as a part of the Kingsbridge  
18 Heights neighborhood, where many of my  
19 students live. I respectfully ask the  
20 commission to redraw the Kingsbridge  
21 Heights into city council District 14.  
22 I also would like to say that I grew up  
23 in Gun Hill, in the Gun Hill area and I  
24 stand in support with my neighbors in  
25 solidarity that the Gun Hill Houses that

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1  
2 Gun Hill Road and the Valley remain a  
3 part of District 12 and that all new --  
4 New York cities who are like ours remain  
5 together, but here I stand for the  
6 Bronx, I stand for the boogie-down  
7 Bronx, which as many people have  
8 testified before me has a long history  
9 of being harmed and it's 2022 and I  
10 stand here in solidarity with my  
11 community and in hopes and in faith that  
12 you all do the right thing because this  
13 is not right and if we are to believe  
14 the numbers of the 2020 census, the  
15 numbers don't match up. So Staten  
16 Island should not have a stronger voice  
17 than the voices of the Bronx, which are  
18 in the millions, in the millions, thank  
19 you so much for this time.

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

22 MS. STEWART: Good evening,  
23 everyone.

24 CHAIR WALCOTT: Good evening.

25 MS. STEWART: I'm going to make it

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1  
2           brief. My name is Lisa Wade Stewart, I  
3           am a lifelong Bronx resident, I grew up  
4           in the south Bronx to immigrant parents  
5           who came from a very small island, known  
6           as Montserrat in West Indies. It was  
7           their lifelong dream to become  
8           homeowners in which they were able to  
9           fulfill that dream in the early 1990s.  
10          We moved to the northeast Bronx into the  
11          12th District, that has been my home for  
12          the last, I'm not going to say how long  
13          because I'm not giving my age out, but  
14          that has been my home. I have now grown  
15          up in that area, I've raised my kids, I  
16          -- um, I've graduated from high school.  
17          I went off to college upstate New York  
18          and I returned back to the 12th  
19          District, the district that I love, I've  
20          become very active in the community.  
21          You saw Mr. Al De Castro, he was  
22          actually the first person who welcomed  
23          my family to the borough of -- uh, to  
24          the 12th District, he came to our house,  
25          we actually lived on 224th Street in the



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1  
2 north Bronx and he came and he welcomed  
3 us. Many years later when I moved out  
4 from my parents' home, I resided in a  
5 couple of areas, however I decided that  
6 I wanted to move to one of the most  
7 affordable communities in the northeast  
8 Bronx and I moved to Co-Op City. She  
9 doesn't know this, but Ms. Saunders was  
10 the first person that I met, who signed  
11 my income affidavit and gave me some  
12 pointers as to where I would move to in  
13 Co-Op City, I thank you for that. I've  
14 been there ever since, I've raised my  
15 family there, I have two children who  
16 attend Truman High School in the Bronx.  
17 Now Co-Op City you may have heard is not  
18 affected by these uh map changes,  
19 however our neighbors over on the Gun  
20 Hill Houses are truly impacted, Evander  
21 High School used to be one of the  
22 not-so-greatest high schools in the  
23 Bronx, in my opinion, however over the  
24 years that high school has made a lot of  
25 changes. We've had local officials that

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1  
2 have worked with that high school, have  
3 partnered with that high school and have  
4 made impacts and dedicated resources for  
5 that high school to turn it around and  
6 there's a lot of work to still be done.  
7 We don't want to split it up. I'm  
8 trying to be fast, so please bear with  
9 me. I just want to say also, keeping  
10 the district together with common  
11 interests, my parents were West Indian,  
12 they were very proud to move to the  
13 north Bronx, there are a lot of -- uh,  
14 Caribbean Americans in the north Bronx  
15 area, I just met two people in the back,  
16 I didn't even know them before I came  
17 here tonight and they live in Co-Op City  
18 and they're from small islands as well  
19 and we all have a common interest, we  
20 want to see each other grow other  
21 communities have their interests they  
22 want to remain intact, please help us to  
23 do that help us to do that, help us to  
24 build our communities, help us to rely  
25 on ourselves. We have a lot of small

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1  
2 businesses in our community that support  
3 us. I'm involved in a lot of  
4 extracurricular activities, I'm not  
5 going to name them all, however they are  
6 all with the interest and in the mind of  
7 developing the community, developing the  
8 youth, keeping families intact, helping  
9 to support one another. You've heard  
10 everyone here tonight, I'm sure you have  
11 more testimony, but please truly  
12 consider that, thank you.

13 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for  
14 your testimony tonight and we're about  
15 to wrap it up. Yes, ma'am.

16 FEMALE SPEAKER: Sorry, I'm --

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry, maybe we  
18 missed our -- one name from -- uh,  
19 Rubina Akhtar, I don't know, we erased  
20 it to be there, but --

21 CHAIR WALCOTT: Who?

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: Rubina Akhtar.

23 CHAIR WALCOTT: She spoke, I  
24 thought.

25 FEMALE SPEAKER: Me?

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CHAIR WALCOTT: Yeah, you spoke --

FEMALE SPEAKER: No, Rubino Akhtar.

CHAIR WALCOTT: And then who else?

MALE SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

CHAIR WALCOTT: I've been saying  
that several times, that's okay, I'm  
sorry, okay, over here and then over  
here, all right. Then we'll wrap it up,  
okay by all means.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah that's not  
more than one minute, she will speak, hi  
--

CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay, not a problem.

MS. AKHTAR: Hi, shuburati, my name  
Rubin Akhtar, I am a member in  
Parkchester District 18, Bronx -- uh, my  
name is Rubin Akhtar -- oh, you said  
English -- okay, sorry, sorry, I'm a  
Bangladeshi community member, I came  
(inaudible) 2017, here my child born and  
she uh when she is going to school in  
Bronx, here I live with my neighbors, my  
relatives, we go to Montefiore Hospital  
for our treatment. We hear that

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1  
2 Parkchester will be divided from  
3 Parkchester if it is happen and then it  
4 will be in trouble, it will be a lot of  
5 struggle for accessing our language or  
6 language justice, if we live together  
7 then our struggle, our support and  
8 everywhere we will meet up and we will  
9 resolve our issues also together -- for  
10 this we want to tie District 18 and  
11 together and we want to, you know,  
12 resolve our things together. Thank you  
13 so much, thanks all.

14 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you so much,  
15 yes, commissioner.

16 MR. UDDIN: Yeah, excuse me --

17 CHAIR WALCOTT: Commissioner would  
18 like to say something, commissioner.

19 MR. UDDIN: I just have a follow-up  
20 question, I used to be in Parkchester  
21 and I'm from Bangladesh, so the question  
22 is that, did you see the new map  
23 District 18 that we --

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah, we saw it's  
25 quite fine, okay, but, if anything,

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1  
2 happens or say, for example, (inaudible)  
3 district the (inaudible) Square partly  
4 actually, you know, there are some uh  
5 things happening, so we don't want that  
6 Montefiore Hospital is our, you know,  
7 (inaudible) and also Baitil Mamur Murji  
8 the Islamic Center, that's also very  
9 close to -- uh, Parkchester the  
10 community of Parkchester, Bangladesh,  
11 right so that's how we want to be -- uh,  
12 so that --

13 MR. UDDIN: The new district that we  
14 published on July 15th, Parkchester has  
15 always been separated, but this is the  
16 first time, Parkchester is in 18.

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah.

18 MR. UDDIN: It went up to  
19 Westchester Square, we brought  
20 everything together in unity.

21 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yeah.

22 MR. UDDIN: But you want to keep  
23 that away or you want to --

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: We want to keep  
25 that way actually, whatever it is, as we

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1  
2 say that some (inaudible) district may,  
3 might be, you know, some difficult  
4 earlier time, but this time assembly  
5 member district also closed with  
6 Westchester Square and that's -- we  
7 welcome our voting power our, you know,  
8 together the community power so we just  
9 --uh, want to be there like that so that  
10 we are supporting this, thank you.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much  
12 and thank you commissioner, yes, sir.

13 MALE SPEAKER: Sure, thank you very  
14 much.

15 CHAIR WALCOTT: I'm sorry I missed  
16 you.

17 MR. QUESTIZE: Good evening,  
18 commissioners. My name is Eddie  
19 Questize, executive director of  
20 Dominicanus USA, DOSA, DOSA is a  
21 non-profit, a non-partisan organization  
22 committed to the civic, social and  
23 economic integration of Dominican  
24 Americans into all facets of the  
25 American life, the result of the 2020

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1  
2 census revealed that Latinos in New York  
3 now represent close to 20 of the state,  
4 local population. This is a strong  
5 growth in the Latino community, it means  
6 that nearly one in five New Yorkers  
7 identifies as Latino. In New York City  
8 28.3 or roughly 2.49 million residents  
9 identify as Latino. We can no longer be  
10 described as a binary group. In fact, a  
11 demographic growth indicates we have a  
12 significant stake in shaping the  
13 electoral space of New York. In review  
14 of the proposed map by the commission,  
15 we were concerned about the mange in  
16 which Latino hubs, in particular,  
17 communities with large Dominican  
18 population and Latinos where groups  
19 (inaudible) community of interest, we  
20 have worked hard to educate and mobilize  
21 the Dominican community. We provide  
22 education and civic engagement support  
23 to the community through our  
24 get-out-the-vote campaign and also help  
25 folks in our community through voter



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1  
2 registration drives. Through our  
3 efforts, we have been able to register  
4 over 130, 000 people and over 50 --  
5 60,000 in the Bronx in neighborhoods  
6 with large Dominican population, we have  
7 also been, will help more than ten  
8 thousand legal permanent residents to a  
9 path to become a U.S citizen. This has  
10 created deep ties within our community  
11 in the northern Manhattan and the Bronx.  
12 This work has yield more participation  
13 in the electoral process and allowed us  
14 to elect Dominican canadiates of choice.  
15 This has increased interest in our youth  
16 in being more civically engaged and  
17 created more opportunities for them to  
18 be involved in the electoral process.  
19 Currently and as a direct result of our  
20 organization efforts alongside the will  
21 of the community. We have elected six  
22 city councils reps who identify as  
23 Dominican within the past 10 years. The  
24 mobilization of the community has  
25 allowed us to elect the first Dominican

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1  
2 to the United States Congress we've also  
3 been able to elect Dominican  
4 representatives to state assembly and  
5 senate. This disturbing existing lines  
6 will disrupt this great mobilization  
7 efforts, which will hurt our ability to  
8 organize around the needs of our  
9 community and create accountability to  
10 their needs Manhattan (inaudible) white  
11 voting blocs in places of traditional  
12 Latino voting blocs in city council  
13 district 7 harms the ability of  
14 Dominican Latinos in the areas to elect  
15 candidates of their choice. The  
16 preliminary maps created (inaudible)  
17 boundary of 160th Street, displacing the  
18 significant portion of the Latino  
19 community while also incorporating  
20 portions of large white population in  
21 the upper west side Manhattan Valley  
22 area also yesterday is adopting the  
23 previous northern boundary at 165th  
24 Street and eastern boundary at Amsterdam  
25 Avenue and incorporating as little of

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1  
2 the west side Manhattan Valley as  
3 possible. In the Bronx, the preliminary  
4 maps also have removed Kingsbridge  
5 Heights from city council District 14,  
6 which deprives the community of their  
7 ability to effectively elect a candidate  
8 of choice that will protect their  
9 interests. Our suggestion is keeping  
10 Kingsbridge Heights in District 14 where  
11 it has historically resided. I point to  
12 these examples as a means of reminding  
13 this commission to keep communities of  
14 interest together, to respect the  
15 (inaudible) district that have served  
16 the Latino community and to remain  
17 cautious of drawing districts in a  
18 manner which will ultimately disempower  
19 the vote of our community. Commission  
20 members, I ask that you consider  
21 revisiting these maps to ensure these  
22 this above mentioned communities are not  
23 split in a manner that will silence our  
24 voices at the voting booth. We must  
25 continuously work to have districts that

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1  
2 preserve the interests of people over  
3 politicians. Thank you for the  
4 opportunity to provide testimony at this  
5 evening, I look forward to the  
6 commissions final sets of maps, which I  
7 hope are truly reflective of the  
8 demographic change and growth of the  
9 Latino community in New York City,  
10 especially in the Bronx, thank you.

11 CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you sir,  
12 much appreciate it and thank you to all.  
13 Have a good night and get home safe.

14 (Whereupon, the examination was  
15 concluded at 9:03 p.m.)  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK )

: ss


COUNTY OF BRONX )

I, SHECHINAH JACKSON, a Notary Public  
within and for the State of New York, do hereby  
certify:

That the witness whose examination is  
hereinbefore set forth was duly sworn and that  
such an examination is a true record of the  
testimony given by such a witness.

I further certify that I am not related  
to any of these parties to this action by blood  
or marriage, and that I am not in any way  
interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
my hand this 17th day of August, 2022.

  
Shechinah Jackson