



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10007
Joseph C. Borelli
Minority Leader

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Testimony of New York City Council Minority Leader Joseph C. Borelli to the New York City Districting Commission of 2022-2023

First, I want to thank you all for your service to the City of New York and its residents. The task you are undertaking will not be easy. In a relatively short time, you have to create fair City Council district maps that ensure all voters have an equal opportunity to have their voices heard, all while balancing the demands of many political interests and constituencies.

With that in mind, I ask that you adhere to the criteria for a districting plan set forth in the New York City Charter and **keep Staten Island's three City Council Districts – Districts 49, 50 and 51 - within the borough.**

Chapter 2A, Section 52 of the Charter, where the criteria can be found, places a very clear emphasis on keeping “communities of interest” together. It states: “District lines shall keep intact neighborhoods and communities with established ties of common interest and association, whether historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious or other.”

Furthermore, this section of the Charter also states that a “district shall not cross borough or county boundaries” nor shall it be “drawn for the purpose of separating geographic concentrations of voters enrolled in the same political party into two or more districts in order to diminish the effective representation of such voters.”

That specific language makes it abundantly clear that splitting one of the aforementioned City Council Districts between Staten Island and Brooklyn or Staten Island and Manhattan would violate both the spirit and intent of these criteria.

As the most suburban borough in the city, Staten Island has unique needs and challenges that are not shared by our fellow New Yorkers in Brooklyn or Manhattan. We are the only borough where the large majority of residents - 69 percent - are homeowners; more than three quarters of Brooklyn and Manhattan residents are renters. More than 83 percent of Staten Island households own cars, most of them more than one, because without a subway, a car is the only viable way to get around. In Brooklyn and Manhattan, where there are an abundance of public transportation options, only 40 percent and 22 percent of households own cars, respectively. In Brooklyn and Manhattan, more than 70 percent of registered voters are Democrats and less than 9 percent are Republicans. Staten Island is much more politically and ideologically diverse, with 41 percent of voters registered as Democrats, 31 percent as Republicans and the remaining split between third parties.

These distinctions matter when it comes to political representation. Our residents care much

more about property taxes and water bills, and about the cost of tolls and state of our roads than others who do not directly pay property taxes, nor drive cars. We have very different views on policing and public safety, and on what should be prioritized in the city budget. On many major issues, we often disagree with our fellow New Yorkers.

That is why it is so important that we keep our three City Council Districts entirely within Staten Island. Splitting one of Council Districts with another borough will dilute Staten Islanders' votes, and dilute Staten Island's unique voice in the City Council.

Thank you for time and consideration, and I look forward to discussing this with you further.



Joseph C. Borelli
Minority Leader, 51st District