

Statement to New York City Districting Commission
Hearing – May 26, 2022
from Mae Lee, Executive Director of Chinese Progressive Association

My name is Mae Lee, Executive Director of Chinese Progressive Association. We are located in Chinatown and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. We serve those who live, work, or go to school in this area. Among other things, we provide services to new immigrants, we help them become U.S. citizens, and register them to vote, and educate so that our community can be more involved in the decision making processes that affect our lives. Typically, those we serve are low income — a typical client comes from a family of 3 earning \$25k or less per year

Chinatown and the Lower East Side are a community of interest due to similar socioeconomic characteristics, and issues of concern. Before 1990, this community of interest was divided along the Bowery at all levels of government, in all representative legislative bodies. During the 1990 redistricting process, it was unified.

Today, Chinatown and the Lower East Side is still a community of interest. The area is small enough for one to walk from end to end. We all go to the same stores, the children go to the same schools. When we go to work, we utilize the same subway stations at Grand Street, East Broadway, or Canal Street, and we use the same bus lines

For low-income residents, it is served by the same HHC hospital (Gouverneur Hospital) and many health clinics. People in need of community services and health care go to the same clinics, and community centers.

We use the same health clinics, senior centers, and community centers. While this community of interest has a significant Asian population, it is not just Asian. There is also a Latinos, Blacks and many others. But no matter the ethnic or racial group, all share many common concerns due to socioeconomic status. Affordable housing is the top concern. Health care is important. And so is public safety – whether it is hate crimes or gun violence. We often say we're all in it together.

We urge the Commission to keep this community of interest – Chinatown and the Lower East Side together.