

**LATINX, AFRICAN AMERICAN &  
SOUTH ASIANS DEVELOPMENT MISSION  
106-09 Liberty Avenue  
Ozone Park, NY 11417**

---

June 1, 2022

Testimony to the New York City Districting Commission

Dear Commission Members,

**DON'T INSTITUTIONALIZE OVERPOWERING, RACISM AND  
HATE CRIMES BY KEEPING ROCHDALE VILLAGE AND SOUTH  
EAST QUEENS OVER VAN WYCK EXPRESSWAY WITH  
RICHMOND HILL, OZONE PARK AND SOUTH OZONE PARK  
IN THE SAME CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT!**

We are a community based organization with various offices in Queens, where we address various issues facing the Latino, Black and South Asian communities. Our membership consists of hundreds of religious, community, business and other leaders. We are informed that we are a protected class, entitled to representation by virtue of being the quintessential community of interest with common characteristics, issues, problems and solutions.

Accordingly, we urge you to collectively agree on and do the following:

**(1) Implement the historic State Assembly Map "AL" as a unifying, naturally composed, compact and contiguous district, which unites the Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park communities under a single City Council District. You are, by law, obliged to**

keep communities of interest together. Council Districts 32 and 28 divide these communities down the middle-a crying shame. The Republicans and Democrats on the last State Redistricting Commission bilaterally agreed on this-a unique occurrence.

(2) While uniting the Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone districts in their own, natural, community of interest district, similarly unite the African-American communities across the Van Wyck into their own natural districts, also. There is too much tension and irreconcilable differences in these 2 communities, and elected officials cannot serve both without conflicts, or butting issues. No discretionary funding, resources or improvements are given Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone because of these competing interests. No one wants that, especially given your mandate and high expectations, the millions of public tax dollars spent on this effort, and the groundbreaking initiatives to get this Commission up and running. It will be a disgrace for all of you, and us, if you fail to agree. Do your job, enough already with 2 sets of districts! Agree on 1! STOP THIS DIVIDE AND RULE POLICY!

This Commission must take geographic, historic and demographic notice that Rochdale Village and the South East Queens Housing Developments/Projects belong more naturally to their own City Council District, and aligns more with the Black identity across the Van Wyck, a natural divide. Each community deserve their own representation. Come to these communities and see for yourself, don't commit malpractice!

Moreover, elected officials routinely take the side of the more affluent and established residents over the immigrant, minority people of color who live in neighboring Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park. This has been documented in several cases in the last few decades. The issues facing the co-ops in the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest coop in the world of Rochdale Village are at odds with the 1 and 2-family homes of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park. "Go back to your countries," the recent residents have been told!

**YOU CANNOT INSTITUTIONALIZE DISUNITY, RACISM AND HATE  
CRIMES BY PUTTING SOUTH EAST QUEENS WITH RICHMOND HILL,  
OZONE PARK AND SOUTH OZONE PARK TOGETHER IN THE SAME  
LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT. YOU WILL BE IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF  
YOUR SWORN DUTIES, AND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT! MINORITY  
MUST NOT BE MADE TO FIGHT MINORITY!**

It is not right, nor legally or morally acceptable, to divide communities that are one, like the Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park communities. They are one and the same, in identity, history, customs, heritage, common issues that affect them, and rely on the same solutions to those issues. To properly address their problems, we respectfully demand that this Commission redraw these marginalized communities into a single City Council seat. This is a glaring, unpardonable error!

Nothing you can decide on can be more important than the touchstone, supervening principle of keeping like communities together. Whereas the Van

Wyck provides a natural divide, there are no great walls separating Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park. Indeed, they are so closely intertwined, you cannot tell where each ends, and the other begins! Why don't you go and see the demographics for yourself?

You just cannot draw lines in a vacuum like the last 3 Commissions did! Your impact will be determinative of the future of our communities and our children!

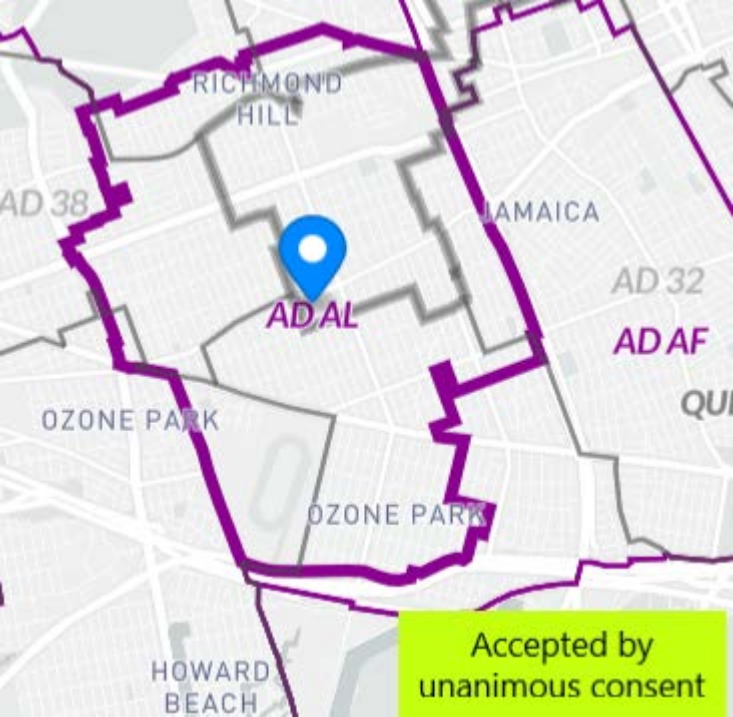
More importantly, depriving the Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park communities of a common, logical City Council seat will be an aberration. We give you notice that we, reluctantly, intend to pursue legal redress as we cannot see, and are advised, that no Court should agree with such arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable actions of perpetrating a race war amongst our communities. We have enough on the record to prove incompetence, retribution and/or *mala fides* on the Commission's part for this blunder, we feel so strongly about this error! Future non-partisan commissions will also be in jeopardy, because you will have failed NYC!

Moreover, there is tension and differences that go to the heart of redistricting principles when you choose to divide communities with uniting heritage, culture, ethnicities and commonalities, such as the South Asian, Latinx, African-Americans and Caribbean immigrants, that live in the Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and South Ozone Park communities vs. SE Queens. You are suppressing and stifling those communities from growing, and having a voice, unconscionably, which will be at odds with your charter, duties and mandate.

You must all embrace the opportunity to stop hate and racism and unite these like communities under different City Council Districts, having their own voices, solve their own issues and problems, and get their own funding, using your unprecedented mandate.

**In conclusion** the communities of South Ozone Park, Ozone Park, and Richmond Hill must be united under one Council District, and it behooves you, as an independent districting commission, to unite them, in accordance with your mandate and the law. Thank you.

Eduardo Velez (Sgd)



RICHMOND HILL

AD 38

JAMAICA

AD 32

AD AL

AD AF

OZONE PARK

QUI

OZONE PARK

HOWARD BEACH

Accepted by  
unanimous consent



**Assembly  
District AL  
accepted by  
consensus**

