

Hello all. I'm glad to have the opportunity to participate in this essential part of the democratic process, in which we draw the lines that determine our representation at the most local and intimate level of government. As the current representative for my district, I'm deeply familiar with the schools, communities, businesses and blocks that comprise Council District 36. I testify today on behalf of my neighbors and in defense of their best interests.

Bed-Stuy and North Crown Heights are historically Black neighborhoods, famous nation-wide for their cultural contributions and bonded through collective memory. The two neighborhoods have grown closer together with the influx of Caribbean immigrants, whose food, music, and fashion are now integral parts of our shared spaces. While clearer cultural boundaries exist between ours and neighboring districts, the cohesion of Bed-Stuy and North Crown Heights is strong, and our unification in a single district has served us well for decades.

On net, since the last census, we lost a few thousand residents. This would justify slightly expanding our borders to realign our population with the Council District standard. Recognizing the strong, and growing, connection between Bed-Stuy and North Crown Heights, the most logical and culturally-responsive way to do so would be to unify North Crown Heights, a cohesive and defined historic district occupying several blocks above Eastern Parkway, into District 36.

Our neighborhoods deserve a unified district to provide them with a unified voice, which they can use to advocate for their shared interests. For fair *demographic* representation, for fair *demo-cratic* representation, I urge this body to draw for my neighbors what they need and deserve: a district closely mirroring its current successful lines, expanded to include the whole of North Crown Heights.