

## Testimony of Port Richmond Strong Civic Assoc. to the New York City Districting Commission of 2022-2023.

**We agree with City Council Minority Leader Borelli's arguments in his testimony of May 26, 2022 to keep Staten Island's three City Council Districts – Districts 49, 50 and 51 - within the borough.**

### Further:

Geography is destiny. There is an ocean between us the rest of the City, an obstacle not overcome to this day -- due to no easy direct transportation connections enjoyed by *all* the other districts.

History is destiny. We had 23,000 British & Hessian Troops camped here in 1776. Despite the risk, Rebels from today's District 49 protected George Washington's boats from seizure by Cornwallis so Washington could cross the Delaware and surprise the Hessians at Trenton. It rescued the American war effort. After that Staten Island endured grinding occupation until 1783 when we started our journey forward in history apart from the other boroughs, until in 1898 we became the Forgotten Borough. Our history has continued to be unique: we were forced to endure the rest of NYC's trash until the largest landfill dump in the world became sacred ground by receiving the remains of the towers after 9/11. Once again our population was uniquely impacted by a foreign attack: we lost the largest percentage of our population in 9/11.

### Districts 49, 50 & 51

We ask that we continue to be the Forgotten Borough, in the sense that we be independent, that all three of our districts be ourselves. Again we agree with all of City Council Minority Leader Borelli's arguments. Let us add, we exist in a different state of mind. I've had people visit me from all over the world. They say, "I've never been to a place like this. I can't quite put my finger on it." I reply, "Well, neither can I, and I live here."

All our Staten Island districts should be exempted from *any* arbitrary population number for two reasons: because we are so close to that number, despite of our uniquely low density; and because we have earned the right to the historic uniqueness which has made us who we are.

### District 49

Remarking on our home District: We take exception to what we consider the specious argument for a geographically independent District 49. Any review of the recording of the July 7 session at Staten Island Borough Hall makes it obvious that the bulk of the testimony is based on fear of losing funding for social services. District 49 is oversaturated with social services, this is borne out by the emphasis of the commenters focused on funding, on taking from the rest of NY, as the Victim State. The usual suspects looking for an uninterrupted revenue stream such as **Project Hospitality** which is the most mis-managed organization by far. Along with other "Special Interests" which were present at this hearing. Fortunately, their words hold little to no weight as they have no business in speaking when these individuals are responsible in ruining neighborhoods.

Our argument is for a District 49 -- kept within the borough-- that does not need to take from the rest of NYC. Port Richmond Strong Civic Assoc. is working hard to make District 49 a District that will give to the rest of NYC.

Homes are being purchased as much as 25% over the asking price by Homeowners who will live there, not Investors. The tide is changing. Due to the strong sense of community and perseverance of Port Richmond's white and black middle class and hard working immigrant families, social service needs are diminishing as income is increasing. The only ones who claim they need more social service funding are those who work in that sector. The circle of "People in Need" (cited in the testimony of those concerned mainly with funding) is becoming smaller. We see this in how many "Food Pantries" are throwing away food each week because of non-participation. Also, those who do participate are leaving unwanted and unneeded food in the streets.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Bullock  
Founder/President



Mario Buonviaggio  
Vice-President