

STATEMENT FROM BRONX

COMMUNITY BOARD #10

NEW YORK CITY

DISTRICTING COMMISSION

AUGUST 23, 2012

Commissioners, Good Evening, my name is John Marano and I am Chairman of Bronx Community Board #10, and we are represented by 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Councilmatic Districts in the northeast Bronx. For many years our Board, with the assistance of our elected officials at all levels of government have endeavored to preserve and enhance the communities that we have been entrusted to represent. To this end we request that any re-districting plan preserve the following communities within the 13<sup>th</sup> Councilmatic District: City Island; Pelham Bay; Country Club; Throggs Neck and Westchester Square-Zerega. These communities are contiguous and naturally flow right into one another. They have many characteristics in common such as housing stock, transportation routes and educational institutions, but more importantly, they derive their sense of community from being in one Councilmatic District. To remove them from this District and place them into others, would do irreparable harm to the good efforts on the part of our Community Board and electeds.

Thank you for your attention and consideration in this matter.



Ruben Diaz, Jr.  
Borough President

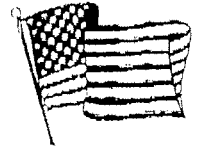
## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10

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John Marano  
Chairperson

Kenneth Kearns  
District Manager

### STATEMENT FROM BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #10 NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION AUGUST 23, 2012

Commissioners, Good Evening, my name is Kenneth Kearns and I am District Manager for Bronx Community Board #10, and we are represented by 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Councilmatic Districts in the northeast Bronx. For many years our Board, with the assistance of our elected officials at all levels of government have endeavored to preserve and enhance the communities that we have been entrusted to represent. To this end we request that any re-districting plan preserve the following communities within the 13<sup>th</sup> Councilmatic District: City Island, Pelham Bay, Country Club, Throggs Neck and Westchester Square. These communities are contiguous and naturally flow right into one another. They have many characteristics in common such as housing stock, transportation routes and educational institutions, but more importantly, they derive their sense of community from being in one Councilmatic District. To remove them from this District and place them into others, would do irreparable harm to the good efforts on the part of our Community Board and elected.

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THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO**

COUNCIL MEMBER, 8<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

**CHAIR**  
PARKS & RECREATION

**COMMITTEES**  
AGING  
CIVIL SERVICE & LABOR  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
CONTRACTS  
HOUSING & BUILDINGS  
PUBLIC HOUSING  
YOUTH SERVICES

## **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION**

**AUGUST 23, 2012**

Good evening members of the New York City Districting Commission. I am Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito and for the past seven years I have represented the 8<sup>th</sup> Council District, which includes El Barrio/East Harlem, Manhattan Valley and part of the Upper West Side in Manhattan as well as Mott Haven in the Bronx. Central Park, Randall's Island and Wards Island, also form part of my district. While the geographical boundaries of the district are a bit unique (I am one of just a few Council Members whose district goes into more than one borough), I am proud to represent such vibrant, diverse and exciting neighborhoods. I believe that my office has been able to effectively represent all corners of my district. I come before you today to ask that you strongly consider maintaining the current configuration of the 8<sup>th</sup> Council District.

I understand the concerns expressed by some of my constituents regarding the current district lines, particularly those who reside on the West Side and the Bronx. A majority of my constituents reside in East Harlem (which is also where our District Office is located), but my office has made efforts to be visible and accessible in the Manhattan Valley/Upper West Side area and in Mott Haven. We hold constituent intake hours on every two weeks in Manhattan Valley and in Mott Haven (on Fridays and Tuesdays, respectively) for those who are unable to travel to our District Office. We also sponsor initiatives that stretch across our district, like our Participatory Budgeting project, and work hard to ensure that discretionary budget resources are also allocated evenly throughout the district.

While East Harlem, the West Side and the South Bronx can seem very distinct, there is also a lot in common, particularly in areas like housing. For example, my district includes the largest number of public housing developments in the City of New York. This includes very large developments not only in East Harlem, but in the Manhattan Valley and Mott Haven portions of my district as well.

As the Districting Commission considers re-drawing the City Council boundaries in Manhattan and the Bronx, I would appeal to the Commission to consider leaving Council District 8 in a similar configuration, understanding that there will be some modifications to account for population shifts in neighboring districts. Based on 2010 Census data, my district's population has been roughly static, as it has only grown by 1.9%. I do not

believe that major changes should be made to the district and the three neighborhoods that I represent.

As you know, District 8 was created to be one that serves a primarily Latino constituency, but we are also home to African American, white and a growing number of Asian residents. It is absolutely critical that the district remains a majority Latino district to preserve its “Voting Rights District” status and ensure the protection against the disenfranchisement of our City’s growing Latino population.

I thank all of the members of the Commission for your hard work and commitment to ensuring that we arrive at a fair redistricting plan.

NYC REDISTRICTING COMMISSION  
Public Testimony – August 23, 2012

My name is Matthew Katz and I have represented, by Island-wide election, the residential community of Roosevelt Island through four terms—eight years—on the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA).

Roosevelt Island was created in 1969 through a 99-year lease between the City of New York and New York State. Prior to that, the island, then known as Welfare Island, had a negligible population, now grown to 14,000 people. It was intended to be a diverse demographic, and in fact, encompasses low-income, middle-income and affluent residents with 60 languages spoken here. By virtue of its island insularity and the presence of a State peace officer department, Public Safety, the Island is recognized by the diplomatic community as a safe place to relocate families, and we have welcomed many United Nations families to our shores.

The Island is administered by a State public authority, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), whose officers and directors are appointed by the Governor. RIRA has worked for fifteen years to require and increase resident influence in the decision-making processes, and in fact, legislation was enacted in 2002 requiring the RIOC Board of Directors to include a majority of Island residents. In 2008 and 2009, we presented six Island residents to the Governor, chosen in Island referenda, who were ultimately appointed to that Board.

These steps towards grassroots democracy did not take place in a vacuum. We have been supported down the line by our elected representatives, whose primary district areas are located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. These public servants have made our goals their goals. They have learned the often-Byzantine details of Island politics, where the balance between City and State authority are invented on a daily basis.

We are beholden to City Council Member, Jessica Lappin, and her predecessor, former Speaker Gifford Miller. We are beholden to State Assembly Member, Micah Kellner and his predecessor, Alexander (Pete) Grannis, and to State Senator Jose Serrano and his predecessor, Olga Mendez. And of course, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney has always had us under her wing. In addition, we have a close working relationship with Community Board 8 Manhattan, and in fact, Island residents serve on the Roosevelt Island Committee of CB8 and on the Roosevelt Island Task Force, supervising the ULURP and EIS responsibilities as the Cornell University graduate facility takes shape.

My point is that busy officials in districts encompassing large areas have taken the time to help us obtain City services, to help fund Island organizations and to support our efforts for increased self governance. These relationships don't evolve overnight. Our districts, and especially our 5<sup>th</sup> Council District, must remain within the Upper East Side, Manhattan constellation, where they have remained since our founding as a residential community. To consider otherwise would be to cripple all our efforts.

Thank you,  
Matthew Katz  
President, RIRA

**TESTIMONY OF ZELNOR MYRIE  
PRESENTED TO THE BRONX PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE  
NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION  
AUGUST 23, 2012**

Good Afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Zellnor Myrie and I am a current Bronx resident, Urban Studies graduate student, and former New York City Council aide.

In the coming months, many qualified citizens and policy makers will offer detailed suggestions to the commission that will help advance the tenets of democratic representation in New York City while underscoring the ideals of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Today, I simply want to direct the commission's attention to some of the legislative implications of the districting process to stress the importance of a thorough and comprehensive process that gives communities of color a voice in government.

The expansion of the City Council from 35 members to 51 came on the heels of a Supreme Court decision exhorting our city to increase representation for communities of color in our legislative branch. Representation for representation's sake, of course, was never the goal, and as such, it is important that we measure the impact that increased minority representation has had on the Council.

My graduate research on Council legislation enacted over the past fifteen years suggests that representation hasn't just been nominal, but that Black, Hispanic, and Asian members have incrementally increased their impact on city policy. Consider the following:

From 1998 to 2000, only 8% of passed legislation was sponsored by a Black, Asian, or Hispanic member. From 2001 to 2003, however, that number jumped to 20%. 2004 to 2006 saw an increase to 27% while that number climbed to 31% from 2007 to 2009. During this current session (January of 2010 through June of this year) we are on pace to have 36% of Council legislation sponsored by a minority member.

And this increase isn't just in overall policies; legislation that has particular impact on communities of color like foreclosure prevention, immigrant assistance programs, and enforcement mechanisms aimed at repairing dilapidated housing, has also increased. Seven such bills were passed in the 1998-2000 session, while our current cycle (2010-2012) has already witnessed 37 such bills enacted.

While these passage rates still have room for improvement given the corresponding population numbers of people of color in our city, it is clear that there is a connection between minority representation and policy enactment on the Council. Districting that continues to encourage such representation not only helps engage

constitutionally protected communities in the political process, but helps increase policy outcomes for them as well.

In addition to these implications, I'd also like to ask that the Commission keep our city's growing young population in mind as they render their districting decisions. Our city gained over 300,000 people between the ages of 20-34 over the past decade, and here in my borough, we boast the highest percentage of persons under the age of 18 in the entire city at 26%. Please keep our issues in mind when discussing things like community cohesion as we reflect what the community will look like in the near future.

Thanks again for the opportunity to testify and for your time and attention to these matters.

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