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CITY OF NEW YORK  
2012 - 2013  
DISTRICTING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
BROOKLYN BOROUGH HALL  
209 JORALEMON STREET  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

AUGUST 13, 2012  
5:25 P.M.

1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2

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8 FRANK PADAVAN

9 ROXANNE J. PERSAUD

10 BENITO ROMANO - CHAIRMAN

11 CARL HUM - Executive Director

12 ROBERT W. HART

13 GLORIA CARVAJAL WOLFE

14 JUSTIN YU

15 MADELINE PROVENZANO

16 OSCAR ODOM, III

17 JAMILA PONTON BRAGG

18 JOHN ROBERT

19 LINDA LIN

20 SCOTT CERULLO

21 MARC WURZEL

22 KAMILLAH HANKS

23

24

25

## NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION

1           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Good evening, everyone.  
2           Thank you for coming today, and welcome to the  
3           New York City Districting Commission's first  
4           public hearing and, and I want to thank Borough  
5           President Marty Markowitz for hosting us here  
6           tonight.

7           Before any of the speakers come forward I'd  
8           like to invite Council Letisha James to address  
9           the room.

10          MS. JAMES: Welcome.

11          CHAIRMAN ROMANO: My name is Benito Romano,  
12          and I am the Chair of the New York City  
13          Redistricting Commission.

14          We have this facility until 9:00 o'clock  
15          tonight, and I want to make sure that we hear  
16          from everyone who is signed up. For those of you  
17          who did not sign up and wish to speak, please see  
18          one of our staff people. They'll identify  
19          themselves in the audience. If you require  
20          translation for your statement, please let the  
21          staff at the registration desk know. They will  
22          insure that a translator is provided when it's  
23          your turn to speak.

24          Before we begin to take testimony I'd like  
25          to make a few opening comments. At the beginning

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1 of this month the Commission advertised in  
2 community and ethnic newspapers announcing the  
3 Commission's public hearing schedule. An E-mail  
4 blast was sent to over 5,000 individuals and  
5 organizations. Various advocacy groups helped  
6 spread the word through their individual  
7 networks, and the hearing schedule was publicized  
8 on our Facebook page and Twitter feed. From the  
9 look of the room, we seem to have reached out to  
10 many of you. Nevertheless, as we go forward in  
11 this process we will seek other additional ways  
12 to maximize your participation in this process.

13 Tonight represents the first step in New  
14 York City's Districting process that is laid out  
15 in the New York City Charter. After the  
16 Commission holds public hearings in each of the  
17 five boroughs over the next 10 days, the  
18 Commission will meet again on August 24 at one  
19 P.M. at the Council's Chambers in City Hall to  
20 discuss what we've learned through this hearing  
21 process and other important issues.

22 At the August 24 Commission meeting we will  
23 direct staff to create a Preliminary District  
24 Plan according to the Commission's instructions.  
25 On September 4, at 1 P.M., at the Council's

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1 Chambers at City Hall, the Commission will meet  
2 again, this time to review and adopt the  
3 Preliminary District Plan that will then be made  
4 available for public inspection and comment.

5 Please note that both these meetings will be  
6 open to the public, but there will not be any  
7 opportunity for the public to speak or make  
8 comments. The public will have an opportunity to  
9 comment on this Preliminary District Plan during  
10 the second round of public hearings held  
11 throughout the five boroughs from 5 P.M. until 9  
12 P.M. on October 2, 3, 4, 10 and 11. The places  
13 are still to be determined, but the hearing  
14 venues will be in different locations to maximize  
15 opportunities for community participation.

16 Comments from this round of public hearings  
17 will then be considered during a stated  
18 Commission meeting scheduled for October 18,  
19 where staff will once again be directed to revise  
20 the Preliminary District Plan in response to the  
21 comments that we receive.

22 At the next stated Commission meeting on  
23 October 30, the revised plan will be presented,  
24 considered and adopted by the Commission. This  
25 revised plan will then be delivered to the City

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1 Council for its inspection and approval by  
2 November 5. According to the City Charter, by  
3 November 27 the Council must either adopt the  
4 Revised District Plan, at which point the plan  
5 will then be filed with the City Clerk, or the  
6 Council can object to the Revised District Plan,  
7 in which case the plan will be returned to the  
8 Commission with the Council's comments and  
9 objections.

10 The Commission will then have until January  
11 5, 2013 to create a revised plan. This will then  
12 set the stage for a new set of public hearings,  
13 which will have been tentatively scheduled from  
14 January 28 to February 8 in each of the five  
15 boroughs. Again, we aim to have these hearings  
16 in different locations from the prior two rounds  
17 of public hearings to maximize the opportunities  
18 for public participation.

19 The Commission will then have until March 5  
20 to create, adopt and submit a final plan to the  
21 City Clerk and to the U.S. Department of Justice  
22 for the Voting Rights Act Section 5 preclearance.  
23 This process is described in a flow chart that is  
24 available for you tonight. Another handout that  
25 is also available are two maps. One map is of the

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1 five boroughs of the current City Council  
2 District lines, and another is a map of Brooklyn  
3 with the boroughs' current City Council District  
4 lines. Both maps include the total population  
5 within the Districts. The population figures  
6 reflected in the handouts have already been  
7 adjusted to reflect prisoners serving state  
8 sentences but having residences within the  
9 respective Council Districts as of the time of  
10 the taking of the U.S. Census of 2010.

11 On the advice of our Council the Commission  
12 will take these figures into consideration when  
13 drawing District lines. It is also important to  
14 note that as we begin these public hearings there  
15 are certain factors that the law obligates the  
16 Commission to consider during the Districting  
17 process. These include the total population  
18 deviation of any District cannot be greater than  
19 10 percent of the average population for all  
20 Districts. Any plan has to insure the fair and  
21 effective representation of racial and language  
22 minorities in the City of New York. Our plan must  
23 keep neighborhoods and communities with  
24 established ties of common interests and  
25 association intact. The District lines must be

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1 compact, and they must be contiguous. We have to  
2 avoid, if at all possible, crossing borough lines  
3 in drawing districts. We also have to avoid  
4 diminishing the effectiveness of representation  
5 of voters, avoid diluting.

6 Finally, I want to bring to your attention  
7 our website, [www.NYC.gov/Districting](http://www.NYC.gov/Districting). The site is  
8 the special repository of all documents and  
9 videos related to the District Commission. It  
10 also contains a complete schedule of our public  
11 hearings. And a form where you can preregister  
12 for all the hearings and be added to our mailing  
13 list. I hope you will all visit the site and let  
14 us know how it can be more informative and  
15 interactive.

16 Now, that concludes my opening remarks, and  
17 before I ask the Commission members to introduce  
18 themselves I'm advised that Jon Paul Lupo, Chief  
19 of Staff of the Borough President, Borough  
20 President Markowitz, has joined us and would like  
21 to say a word or two.

22 MR. LUPU: Yeah, thank you very much,  
23 Chairman Romano, Executive Director Carl Hum, and  
24 all the Commissioners for holding this hearing at  
25 Borough Hall tonight. I especially thank you to

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1 all the members of the public who have given  
2 their time to come out and give their input on  
3 what is a very important process in the  
4 functioning of elections in New York City.

5 I have two requests from the Borough  
6 President. One that may not be within your  
7 powers, Commissioners, as you go through this  
8 process. One, the Borough President would like  
9 you to see what you can do to reverse the great  
10 mistake of '98, and maybe when you draw your  
11 lines Brooklyn can become its own city again.

12 (Laughter from the audience.)

13 MR. LUPPO: Maybe you'll look into it.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Bring back the Dodgers.

15 MR. LUP: The second thing, a little bit  
16 more serious, the Borough President would like  
17 you to do everything in your power to make sure  
18 that neighborhoods and communities are kept  
19 together as you go through this process so that  
20 all residents of Brooklyn and New York City are  
21 represented in the communities in which they  
22 reside.

23 With that I'll leave you to your work, enjoy  
24 our space, and thank you very much for your  
25 service.

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1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

2 (The audience applauded.)

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: At this point I'd like to  
4 have the Commissioners introduce themselves,  
5 starting down at my left and working across in  
6 this direction, and you can skip me and keep  
7 going.

8 MR. WURZEL: Hi, my name Marc Wurzel.  
9 From -- I live in Manhattan. This is my second go  
10 round on this Commission.

11 MR. YU: My name is Justin Yu from  
12 Manhattan. Happy to be in Brooklyn.

13 MR. HART: My name is Rob Hart from Staten  
14 Island.

15 MR. ROBERT: Thank you. My name is John  
16 Robert, and I live in the Bronx, and I love  
17 Brooklyn.

18 MR. PADAVAN: I'm Frank Padavan from Queens,  
19 but I was born in Brooklyn like everybody else.

20 MS. PROVENZANO: I'm Madeline Provenzano,  
21 former New York City Councilwoman, and I'm from  
22 the Bronx. City Hall.

23 MS. PERSAUD: Good evening. I'm Roxanne  
24 Persaud from Brooklyn.

25 MS. HANKS: Good evening. I'm Kamillah

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1 Hanks, and I'm from Staten Island. I'm glad to be  
2 in Brooklyn.

3 MS. LIN: Hi, I'm Linda Lin, and I'm a  
4 Queens resident.

5 MS. CARVAJAL WOLFE: I'm Gloria Carvajal  
6 Wolfe, and I reside in Manhattan.

7 MR. ODOM: Oscar Odom, III. I am Brooklyn.  
8 (Laughter from the audience.)

9 MR. CERULLO: I'm Scott Cerullo, I'm from  
10 Staten Island.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Our first  
12 speaker is James Hong from the Asian American  
13 Community Coalition on Redistricting and  
14 Democracy.

15 MR. HONG: Good afternoon, Districting  
16 Commission members, staff, and concerned citizens  
17 of Brooklyn. My name is James and -- James Hong,  
18 and I am speaking on behalf of ACCORD, the Asian  
19 American Community Coalition on Redistricting &  
20 Democracy. ACCORD is a non-partisan Pan-Asian  
21 coalition of organizations and individuals  
22 committed to advancing the opportunity --  
23 opportunities of Asian-Pacific Americans and  
24 minority communities to meaningfully participate  
25 in the political process. ACCORD realizes that

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1           redistricting plays a pivotal and fundamental  
2           role in these opportunities, and we support  
3           redistricting plans that keep together  
4           communities of interest that exist in and around  
5           ethnic neighborhoods across New York.

6           Historically, Asian-Pacific Americans in New  
7           York City have been, like other minorities,  
8           treated unequally by District lines. The growth  
9           of the APA population in New York City has  
10          dramatically outpaced all other racial groups,  
11          and now, in 2012, it is imperative that our  
12          Districts account for the possibility that Asian  
13          voters are being disenfranchised by the  
14          current -- by the outdated City Council lines.

15          In Brooklyn, the growth of the APA  
16          population is astounding. 40 percent overall  
17          increase, and a 46 percent increase among the  
18          voting age population. There are now over a  
19          quarter million APA's in Brooklyn alone. This  
20          means around 1 out of 4 APA's in New York City is  
21          a resident of Brooklyn. Many of these APA's live  
22          in an area that spans from parts of Sunset Park  
23          over into Bensonhurst, much of Bensonhurst, and  
24          while the current District lines may have served  
25          southwest Brooklyn in 2002, this part of the

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1 Borough has changed rapidly and dramatically over  
2 the past 10 years. Bensonhurst has become one of  
3 the City's most robust Chinatowns, and Sunset  
4 Park has become an even greater center of  
5 commercial and cultural activities for APA's in  
6 Brooklyn; however, these adjacent neighborhoods  
7 are divided into at least 5 different Districts  
8 with the current lines: The 38th, the 43rd, the  
9 44th, the 47th, and the 50th. We refer the  
10 Commission to the Asian American Legal Defense  
11 and Education Funds's Communities of Interest  
12 Survey and the neighborhood boundaries contained  
13 in that document. As a member of ACCORD, AALDEF,  
14 has rigorously solicited input from our member  
15 organizations, and even beyond, in drafting these  
16 boundaries, and we feel that those in Brooklyn  
17 can be especially helpful in informing the  
18 Commission's revisions. And those neighborhoods  
19 or portions of those neighborhoods contain  
20 resident sharing economic, social, political  
21 linguistic, cultural and educational concerns  
22 that deserve to be reflected in the results of  
23 the redistricting process.

24 So I'll just end there. There's more in a  
25 written statement, but we are joined by many of

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1 our members here. The United Chinese Association  
2 of Brooklyn, OCA-NY, and AALDEF will be speaking  
3 later.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Hong.

5 Before we get to the next speaker, we're  
6 going to have to move the mic so the cameras have  
7 a clear shot of the Commission.

8 (Brief pause while the speaker microphone is  
9 moved to the opposite of the room.)

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Our next speaker is Wah  
11 Lee of OCA-NY.

12 MR. LEE: Good evening. My name is Dr. Wah  
13 Lee. I am testifying on behalf of OCA-NY.  
14 OCA-NY is a founding member of ACCORD. I have  
15 been a board member of OCA-NY since 2010.

16 I am 40 years old. I grew up in Bensonhurst  
17 where I worked in my parents' dry-cleaner and  
18 attended P.S. 247. I completed a medical  
19 internship in Sunset Park Lutheran Medical Center  
20 where I am still affiliated as a physician.

21 The 2010 census reviewed that the number of  
22 Asian-Americans has reached a million in New York  
23 City with over a quarter million in Brooklyn  
24 alone. We urge the City Council to keep  
25 communities of common interest with significant

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1 Asian populations together. The Asian population  
2 in Brooklyn grew by 41 percent since 2000. OCA-NY  
3 supports a City Council District that contains  
4 parts of Bensonhurst and Sunset Park linked by  
5 similar communities of interest living  
6 approximately between 60th and 71th Streets.  
7 These three localities have shared economic ties,  
8 resources, and social networks. The Asian  
9 plurality community living approximately between  
10 60th and 71th Streets links the Asian  
11 neighborhoods of Sunset Park and Bensonhurst and  
12 caters to both of them. For instance, when I  
13 organized funeral services for my father-in-law  
14 we chose the funeral home Ralph Aievoli & Son  
15 located on 65th Street. For the geographic  
16 convenience of my in-laws' family who are  
17 scattered south of Sunset Park and Bensonhurst,  
18 this business recognized the changing  
19 demographics of these interconnecting  
20 neighborhoods. They have Chinese funeral  
21 services in Chinese. My neighbor, who is Chinese-  
22 American and has lived in Bensonhurst all his  
23 life, also used this funeral home on 65th Street  
24 when his father passed away.

25 OCA-NY proposes that the Asian population in

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1 Sunset Park be linked to the Asian population in  
2 Bensonhurst by the Asian plurality community  
3 living approximately between 60th and 71st  
4 Streets. These populations have similar social  
5 needs and have much in common other than race.  
6 These three communities, while geographically  
7 contiguous are currently not in the same  
8 District. These three communities have similar  
9 needs regarding bilingual access to healthcare,  
10 quality of ESL options in public education,  
11 transportation to employment opportunities,  
12 culturally competent service and hate crimes  
13 prevention. State Assembly District 49  
14 recognizes the communities of common interest in  
15 Sunset Park and the Asian plurality community  
16 approximately between 60th and 71st Streets,  
17 which extends to Bensonhurst. State Assembly  
18 District 47 recognizes and keeps intact the  
19 community of interest in Bensonhurst. Since City  
20 Council Districts are larger than State Assembly  
21 Districts, we believe it is feasible to create a  
22 City Council District encompassing the  
23 communities of Asians in Sunset Park and  
24 Bensonhurst linked by the Asian plurality  
25 community approximately between 60th and 71st

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1 Streets. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Lee.

3 Our next speaker is Steve Chung of the  
4 United Chinese Association of Brooklyn.

5 MR. CHUNG: First of all, who is the  
6 timekeeper? Okay. Before you press the button,  
7 right -- oh, start already. I was here in the  
8 state task force (phonetic) public hearing,  
9 right, but I love this Commission because you are  
10 all from New York City. But in the state task  
11 force some of them are from almost from Canada.  
12 So saw, they probably don't understand what we  
13 talk about from New York City.

14 (The audience applauded.)

15 MR. CHUNG: And my -- good evening first,  
16 right. Good evening for the Commission members,  
17 and good evening for the good, my fellow good  
18 citizens, and for some of the good member already  
19 brief describe Brooklyn is a very ripe and very  
20 drastic changed neighborhood now. In Asian  
21 community, and I'm from -- by the way, my name is  
22 Steve Chung, and I'm the President of the United  
23 Chinese association of Brooklyn. And our  
24 association is located in Bensonhurst, and we,  
25 Bensonhurst, and we eat in Bensonhurst, we travel

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1 in Bensonhurst, we serve in Bensonhurst, and also  
2 we travel to Sunset Park too because Sunset Park  
3 and Bensonhurst right now is called the two  
4 Chinatown in Brooklyn. And what I'm trying to  
5 propose is in 2011 we create a first ever  
6 political District in Brooklyn, which is the  
7 Assembly District 49. And now I'm proposing,  
8 right, we can build another influential District,  
9 City District, in by combining Bensonhurst and  
10 Sunset Park together. And together, right, we can  
11 preserve our community with value and interest.  
12 And as of now, right, Bensonhurst is -- was  
13 divided into four City Council District, and  
14 Bensonhurst was three. And by combining  
15 together, right, we can create a new City Council  
16 with 47 percent Asian population, and that will  
17 encourage the Asian population to be more  
18 involved with voting engagement, because they  
19 feel that now their vote is more important, their  
20 vote can be influence the final election result.  
21 And I hope you can take into consideration with  
22 ACCORD proposal, and my proposal, and our  
23 community proposal. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Chung.

25 Our next speaker is Esmeralda Simmons of the

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1 Center For Law & Justice at Medgar Evers College.

2 MS. SIMMONS: Good evening. My name is  
3 Esmeralda Simmons, and I wish a good evening to  
4 all the members of the Commission as well as the  
5 Executive Director.

6 I'm the Executive Director of the Center For  
7 Law & Social Justice of Medgar Evers College. We  
8 are a 26-year-old institution founded for the  
9 purpose of providing quality advocacy and  
10 research and training in advocacy services to New  
11 Yorkers. We specialize in racial justice work,  
12 and one of our subspecialties is in voting  
13 rights.

14 As I have provided you in written testimony,  
15 you will see that the Center For Social Law &  
16 Justice has a 25-year-old history of advocating  
17 for voting rights equity in New York City for  
18 black New Yorkers and New Yorkers of color in  
19 particular. Through our current Racial Justice  
20 Redistricting Project, the Center For Social Law  
21 & Justice has conducted a series of community  
22 training on the use of census data to the  
23 New York State and City redistricting process.  
24 We also spearheaded a coalition, Black New  
25 Yorkers For Fair Redistricting, that seeks to

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1 protect the rights of black New Yorkers through  
2 the districting process. We are also an active  
3 member, very proud member, of the Unity Map Group  
4 that produced the heralded Unity Maps during the  
5 state redistricting process. Those Unity Maps  
6 clearly demonstrated how the voting rights of all  
7 Voting Rights Act-protected groups and New York  
8 City could simultaneously be respected and  
9 protected.

10 The center for Social Law & Justice intends  
11 to produce a City Council Unity Map with our co-  
12 organizations, which we hope will be seriously  
13 considered by the Commission. Our  
14 recommendations -- and I note that some of these  
15 recommendations have already been implemented and  
16 I'm very, very proud as a former vice chair of  
17 this commission to see that things are moving  
18 along so swiftly notwithstanding the late start.  
19 The Center For Law & Social Justice strongly  
20 urges the New York City Redistricting Commission  
21 to take all steps necessary to complete the  
22 redistricting process in a timely fashion. 1.  
23 Immediately implement the law that ended prison  
24 gerrymandering; 2. Make the adjusted BTM data  
25 downloadable and available to the public online;

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1 3. Chart out a comprehensive timetable. You've  
2 already done that; 4. Give notice of the second  
3 and third set of hearings -- and we applaud the  
4 evening hours as they allow for greater input --  
5 toward the protection of voting rights of black  
6 New Yorkers. Black votes make up 25.5 percent of  
7 all of New York City's population; over 2 million  
8 people. I'll conclude.

9 Notwithstanding that fact, for the first  
10 time in three decades there is not a single black  
11 senior staff member serving on the Commission or  
12 at the Commission. Such blatant disregard for  
13 diversity at the Commission does not indicate the  
14 level of respect that will be needed during the  
15 districting process where cultural diversity and  
16 sensitivity are necessary. We call on the  
17 Districting Commission to undertake its duties  
18 with the heightened respect for the black  
19 communities throughout the City and the voting  
20 rights of black New Yorkers.

21 Public access process procedure. I will  
22 simply say that we are calling for you, calling  
23 upon the Commission to -- and I'll give this to  
24 you in writing -- give the public full access to  
25 all of your data, including community-of-interest

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1 data, election results, and socioeconomic data  
2 that's not readily available. Establish  
3 dedicated, user friendly, interactive  
4 multi-language online maps and software. Make  
5 the redistricting criteria public. I know it's  
6 in the Charter, but you might need to do a little  
7 more than send people to the Charter, and have it  
8 online assistance and a live help line.

9 I thank you. I look forward to working you  
10 with you cooperatively so that we can have a  
11 smooth and beneficial redistricting process for  
12 all New Yorkers.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Our next  
14 speaker is Dick Dadey of Citizens Union.

15 MR. DADEY: Good evening, Commissioners. My  
16 name is Dick Dadey. I'm the Executive Director  
17 of Citizens Union, a non-partisan organization  
18 dedicated to making Democracy work for all New  
19 Yorkers. We appreciate the complexity of the  
20 task that you are about to undertake. While the  
21 New York City Charter provides a good foundation  
22 for the process of drawing lines with mandated  
23 deadlines and criteria, there's more that can be  
24 done to insure that the public has the utmost  
25 confidence in the process as it unfolds. We

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1 believe that the Commission can administratively  
2 additional perhaps beyond the City Charter to  
3 ensure the redistricting process is open,  
4 transparent and fair. We have no specific  
5 suggestions at this point about the makeup or the  
6 design of specific Districts, but it is important  
7 to note that the changes for 2013 will likely be  
8 greater than those made in the 2003 lines since  
9 the City's demography has changed significantly  
10 in the past decade with increases of 31 percent  
11 in the Asian community and 8 percent in the  
12 Latino community.

13 We are encouraged that the Commission plans  
14 on providing online mapping software to allow the  
15 public to draw its own District lines. We  
16 additionally recommend the Commission do the  
17 following to improve the transparency and public  
18 participation. Three things: 1. Make available  
19 on the Commission's website any maps, comments,  
20 and testimony provided by the public. Several  
21 bodies in New York City have provided on their  
22 web sites public feedback that has been received  
23 through various channels allowing information  
24 perspectives to be shared with the public; 2.  
25 Providing the public any underlying data for the

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1 draft maps revealing District population in user  
2 friendly formats. It will be essential to  
3 provide the public with the information until  
4 it's necessary to conduct their independent  
5 analyses of the proposed maps; 3. Webcast future  
6 Commission meetings and hearings. We understand  
7 that the Commission staff is examining the  
8 possibility of web casting such hearings and  
9 meetings of the Commission. The 2010 City Charter  
10 Commission web cast its proceedings to locations  
11 outside of government offices, holding many of  
12 its meetings at different locations in all the  
13 five boroughs. Citizens Union provided  
14 recommendations to the City Charter Revision  
15 Commission regarding the drawing of lines based  
16 on new criteria which we consider you to adopt.  
17 There are essentially two. The current criteria  
18 is very good, but we urge you to consider these  
19 additional two criteria: 1. To the extent  
20 practical, the most and least population Council  
21 District should not exceed or be lower than the  
22 mean population of all its Districts by more than  
23 1, 2 or 3 percent unless of course needed to  
24 comply with the Voting Rights Act or as required  
25 by the New York City Charter. Council Districts

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1 should also not be drawn to favor or oppose any  
2 incumbent legislator, or any previous or presumed  
3 candidate for office. This builds on the existing  
4 criteria and prevents the weakening of any  
5 political party's representational power.

6 Citizens Union also recommends that the  
7 number of Commission members' signatures to adopt  
8 a Council District Plan should be a minimum of 11  
9 to 15 signatures. The current threshold is 9 to  
10 15. The higher threshold will ensure the  
11 requirements set forth in the criteria  
12 particularly provisions to preventing partisan  
13 gerrymandering are met in the final plan.

14 I wish you well and congratulate you on the  
15 public service ahead of you.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Dadey.

17 Our next speaker is William Stanford.

18 MR. STANFORD: The best way to redraw these  
19 Districts is to go by the bus corridors such as  
20 Fulton Street, Lafayette Avenue, Beadel Avenue,  
21 Myrtle Avenue, Nostrand Avenue, Flatbush Avenue,  
22 Ralph Avenue, which is what I told the last four  
23 representatives earlier this year.

24 And also, starting public hearings at 5 P.M.  
25 is a bad idea. They shouldn't start to run by 5

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1 to 9, they should run between 7 and 9. People  
2 are still signing out at 5, and you're forcing to  
3 them to break their necks on their way here like  
4 a bunch of fugitives, like Dr. Richard Kimble,  
5 which I find annoying. It reminds me of the MTA.  
6 Okay? Public hearings should start between 7 and  
7 9, not between 5 and 9.

8 This public hearing was supposed to start at  
9 5. It started over 15 minutes later because some  
10 of you -- most of you were late. If I can arrive  
11 here before 4:30 why couldn't you do the same?  
12 It's the same with the MTA. I'm at this site  
13 long before bell time, and they arrive when they  
14 feel like it. I don't get that.

15 When you redraw these lines don't make the  
16 same mistakes the last four representatives made.  
17 They did a poor job drawing the state and federal  
18 government districts. Don't make the same mistake  
19 they made. As I said, consider going by the bus  
20 corridors. You still -- keep the neighborhood  
21 together, but go by the bus corridors, that's the  
22 best way to redraw them. You know where they  
23 are, just get a bus map. That's the best way.

24 As I said, web casts? I don't know if  
25 whether they should be web cast. They maybe they

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1 should. After all, it's the latest technology.

2 (Addressed to Mr. Wurzel.) You need to turn  
3 that off. Put it on vibrate before I go on the  
4 mic. That's not very swift, that's definitely  
5 not very swift.

6 So as I said, my suggestion is go by the bus  
7 corridors. If the public wants web casts, start  
8 the program at 7 P.M., not 5 P.M. That's all I  
9 have to say for now. But just, just take that  
10 into consideration, because as I said, people  
11 still sign out at 5 P.M., so by the time they  
12 arrive here they may not get a chance to speak.  
13 If they don't get a chance to speak they'll just  
14 breathe down your neck or jump down your throat.  
15 You don't want that. You want to hear from the  
16 public. You have to convenience, not  
17 inconvenience them. So take that into  
18 consideration.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Stanford.

20 Our next speaker is Tom Murphy.

21 MR. MURPHY: Good evening. I want to give  
22 my condolences to the two members of the  
23 Commission who represent -- who are from  
24 Brooklyn. They have the biggest workload in that  
25 they alone are to be familiar and give the rest

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1 of you advice in drawing the most numbered of  
2 districts in the City of New York, yet there is  
3 only two of them for the largest borough of the  
4 City. The smallest borough has three members. And  
5 they only have, I think, two districts drawn. One  
6 line. They just have to separate the firemen from  
7 the policemen, and they got it done. Of course  
8 there are five members from Manhattan. And that  
9 is by design, and I do believe that here in  
10 Brooklyn where we have, as you've been told by my  
11 neighbors in Sunset Park, and I am from Sunset  
12 Park, I'm from Bensonhurst, great shifts in  
13 population requiring great wisdom in figuring out  
14 what the next 10 years, how the next 10 years the  
15 City Council should be drawn. I don't know how  
16 you are going to get it done with this lack of  
17 resources in one area, and there's also a lack of  
18 resources for the Bronx, which could use a little  
19 work, too. But inasmuch as someone in their  
20 wisdom saw to it that the Bronx should get two  
21 and Brooklyn should get two and Manhattan should  
22 get what they were owed, I don't see a good  
23 product coming out. I think you will be short on  
24 time, short on resources, short on understanding.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Murphy. Our

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1 next speaker is Linda Orlando.

2 MS. ORLANDO: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank  
3 you, Commissioners. My name is Linda Orlando. I  
4 live in the Towers of Bay Ridge on 65th Street --

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Can you just keep your  
6 voice up, Miss Orlando.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can I just lower this a  
8 little bit? Okay. Okay.

9 Dear Commissioners, the Towers of Bay Ridge  
10 are a State of New York Mitchell-Lama housing  
11 co-op complex with 811 apartments. I'm talking  
12 about the Bay Ridge 43rd Council District. The  
13 Towers of Bay Ridge are a State of New York  
14 Mitchell-Lama a housing co-op complex with 811  
15 apartments on 65th Street. 260 65th Street is on  
16 2nd, is between 2nd and 3rd Avenue, and 350 are  
17 between 3rd and 4th Avenue in Brooklyn. They  
18 were built in 1972. At that time they were in the  
19 43rd Council District. In 1981 they were  
20 redistricted into the 38th Council District.

21 I would like to ask the Commissioners to  
22 move the boundary line two blocks from Wakeman  
23 Place back to 65th Street and return the Towers  
24 of Bay Ridge back to the 43rd Council District.

25 Bay Ridge is a naturally occurring

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1 retirement community (NORC) with many senior  
2 citizens who lived their here all their lives and  
3 would like to remain this in community the rest  
4 of their lives. The seniors who live in the  
5 Towers, and many other seniors in the  
6 neighborhood, avail themselves of services  
7 provided by the Bay Ridge Community Center on  
8 Ovington Avenue and 4th Avenue, Seniors on the  
9 Move bus service that takes the seniors all  
10 around Bay Ridge to all the doctors' offices, and  
11 many other senior services and health and medical  
12 facilities available in the Bay Ridge area.

13 During the last 40 years the shareholders of  
14 the Towers have patronized every business of  
15 Bay Ridge. They visit all the doctors and  
16 lawyers. Their children attend the Bay Ridge  
17 schools. Their seniors are members of the senior  
18 centers and veterans chapters. They have  
19 accounts in all the banks. They are members of  
20 all the Bay Ridge community organizations. They  
21 worship in all the churches. All the stores know  
22 our refrigerator, stove, air conditioner  
23 requirements, floor and window dressing  
24 requirements. The shareholders frequently  
25 frequent all the stores on 86th Street, 3rd

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1 Avenue and 5th Avenue. They should be in the same  
2 District and be represented by the same Council  
3 Member that represents all the businesses in  
4 which are located all the Bay Ridge shopping  
5 areas.

6 The Towers have always been an integral part  
7 of Bay Ridge and should be included in the 43rd  
8 Council District. Above Wakeman Place is the  
9 Belt Parkway-65th Street entrance and exit ramps,  
10 which are surrounded by a grassy area. There are  
11 no structures involved other than the Towers of  
12 Bay Ridge, and my redistricting request, my  
13 request involves nothing other than the two  
14 towers, the two buildings on 65th Street between  
15 2nd and 3rd and 3rd and 4th. It's just a grassy  
16 area before the highway. Please move the boundary  
17 line from Wakeman Place to 65th Street so the  
18 Towers of Bay Ridge could be back in the 43rd  
19 Council District. Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Miss Orlando.

21 (The audience applauded.)

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Our next speaker is Stefan  
23 Ringel. I hope I'm pronouncing it correctly.

24 MR. RINGEL: Good afternoon. Good afternoon,  
25 Commission. My name is Stefan Ringel. I work

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1 for Council Member Jumaane Williams. I will be  
2 reading his testimony.

3 Good afternoon. My name is Jumaane D.  
4 Williams. I serve as representative for the 45th  
5 District and New York City Council covering the  
6 Communities of Flatbush, East Flatbush,  
7 Flatlands, Midwood and Canarsie.

8 I would like to thank the New York City  
9 Redistricting Commission for allowing me to  
10 testify today at the first public hearing of the  
11 (inaudible) as we discussed the initial phases of  
12 your work in drafting new legislative maps for  
13 the City Council. Special greetings go to  
14 Roxanne Persaud who serves my in my district as  
15 the President of the 69th Precinct Community  
16 Council.

17 First I'd like to commend Mayor Bloomberg,  
18 (inaudible) for assembling a commission that  
19 reflects the diversity of background in our city.  
20 The redistricting process requires an  
21 understanding of the many communities within the  
22 five boroughs and the importance of giving every  
23 voice proper representation. The 15 members of  
24 the Commission under the leadership of Chair  
25 Romano and Executive Director Hum presents the

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1 breadth and depth of experiences that should  
2 serve them well in this process. With the  
3 importance of various perspectives in mind, I  
4 hope the Commissions will hire a staff that is  
5 equally as diverse as its membership. Their  
6 hands-on experience will be essential to guiding  
7 this process, especially since technical details  
8 of redistricting will be new to certain members.

9 At this time it does not seem the Commission  
10 staff reflects this standard diversity which we  
11 should be collectively seeing. Indeed diversity  
12 should be a top priority of every stage of the  
13 redistricting process. (Inaudible) in  
14 demographics but on a personal level is about  
15 protecting and maintaining the voices of common  
16 communities. Our government performs best when  
17 the range of those voices citywide is reflected  
18 by the elected officials who serve and advocate  
19 for them. Political considerations alone cannot  
20 be the determinative factor in how the Commission  
21 draws these lines. Trust in government is  
22 seriously damaged by the state redistricting  
23 process this year due to the blatant  
24 gerrymandering that Senate Republicans concocted.  
25 As an elected official, my personal interests

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1 pale in concordance with the interests of my  
2 (inaudible). To further ensure that this is  
3 achieved as well as to eliminate any specter of  
4 malfeasance, I call upon the Commission to expand  
5 public access to take that and technology that  
6 will allow everyday New Yorkers to observe the  
7 redistricting process and to offer their input  
8 that will offer a more complete picture of how  
9 the City has changed over the last 10 years. I  
10 also hope that the Commission will properly  
11 account for our incarcerated population. Last  
12 December the State Supreme Court upheld a law  
13 that ensures prisoners will be counted in their  
14 home communities, not where they are jailed. It  
15 seems clear this decision governs over population  
16 counts of both city and state redistricting  
17 (inaudible) artificially diluting the electoral  
18 influence of certain communities in the past, but  
19 I am confident the Commission will confirm the  
20 Court's rule and the concept of fair  
21 representation.

22 Thank you again for allowing me to testify  
23 today. I am additionally submitting maps for the  
24 45th Council District for the record. Feel free  
25 to contact my office for any followup as we move

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1 forward in this process.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Ringel.

3 Our next speaker is Kevin Peter Carroll,  
4 Democratic District Leader for the 60th Assembly  
5 District.

6 MR. CARROLL: Good evening, Commissioners,  
7 and thank you for listening to the public about  
8 the important topic of redistricting. My name is  
9 Kevin Peter Carroll, and I am the Democratic  
10 District Leader, State Committee Member for the  
11 60th Assembly District in Bay Ridge.

12 I'm here tonight to talk about our  
13 neighborhood's Council District lines. Currently  
14 we are represented by one Community Board,  
15 District 10, Community Board 10 and one police  
16 precinct district, the 68th Precinct. This is  
17 ideal as when residents have concerns that need  
18 the attention of the Community Board and/or the  
19 police, our residents know where to turn. The  
20 same unfortunately cannot be said for our elected  
21 representatives. I know that this Commission only  
22 pertains to Council lines, but it has to be said  
23 my community has been divided into four different  
24 Assembly Districts, two different State Senate  
25 Districts, two different Congressional Districts,

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1 and two different Council Districts. I'm the  
2 first to admit that when it comes to Council  
3 District lines almost all of Bay Ridge is  
4 included in one District, currently numbered the  
5 43rd District.

6 For those of you who may not know, when I  
7 speak about Bay Ridge I am speaking about the  
8 blocks between 65th Street and 101st Street, from  
9 Shore Road to 10th Avenue here in Brooklyn. The  
10 Council District is contiguous in those areas  
11 with the sole exception being the Towers of Bay  
12 Ridge. Two Towers with 811 units combined,  
13 located at 260 and 350, 65th Street. They  
14 currently reside in the 38th Council District  
15 that is mostly in our neighboring Sunset Park. I  
16 know many of the residents of the Towers, a lot  
17 them are here today, they're active in the same  
18 civic, religious, and political organizations  
19 that other members of our Bay Ridge neighbors  
20 frequent and are active in; however, when I've  
21 gone around there they feel like the stepchildren  
22 of Bay Ridge. This is because they're not part of  
23 any of the political districts in our community.  
24 They are represented by a different congressman,  
25 a different State Senator, a different State

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1 Assembly person, and a different Council person.  
2 The congressional state lines, they are set  
3 already, and our leaders in Albany did not listen  
4 to our concerns when we asked for a single  
5 contiguous district.

6 I am now asking you, the Commissioners, and  
7 the City not to make the same mistake that our  
8 leaders in Albany did by slicing and dicing our  
9 community. Legislative lines should be drawn to  
10 be inclusive of entire neighborhoods. Past  
11 Council redistricting commissions have done that  
12 for the most part in Bay Ridge. This year you  
13 have the opportunity to correct the fact that the  
14 Towers are not part of the Bay Ridge Council  
15 District. Our neighbor would warrant the  
16 inclusion of the Towers and, if need to be, due  
17 to population trends I would advocate for a small  
18 portion of the Bensonhurst easternmost part of  
19 the 43rd to be included in the 47th District.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Carroll.

21 MR. CARROLL: Thank you for my testimony.  
22 And if I could add one statement from a Bay Ridge  
23 Tower resident told me when I spoke to him about  
24 redistricting that is, the Towers of Bay Ridge  
25 are more than just a name, they are the

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1 neighborhood in which we live in. Thank you.

2 (The audience applauded.)

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Our next speaker is Jerry  
4 Vattamala of the Asian American Legal Defense and  
5 Education Fund.

6 MR. VATTAMALA: Good evening. My name is  
7 Jerry Vattamala. I am a staff attorney with the  
8 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund,  
9 AALDEF. AALDEF is a civil rights organization  
10 protecting the advancement of the rights of Asian  
11 Americans through litigation advocacy and  
12 education. AALDEF has been in involved in  
13 redistricting for about 30 years, since 1982.  
14 State Assembly, State Senate, Congressional,  
15 Council level. I have submitted documents to the  
16 staff in front of you, I just passed out a  
17 document that AALDEF prepared, the Asian-American  
18 boundaries. We developed this document by  
19 meeting with the community groups throughout New  
20 York City biracial Asian-American populations  
21 since March of last year, and we asked the  
22 community groups three basic questions: 1. What  
23 are the boundary lines of your community down to  
24 the street? Now we know what the, you know,  
25 there's zip codes and City Planning boundaries.

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1 We wanted to know what members of the community  
2 felt their own boundary lines were and where  
3 another community started. So those are the  
4 lines that are in front of you right now.

5 We also asked them what are the  
6 characteristics of the community, what makes your  
7 community your community. That dealt with  
8 socioeconomic status, where do people work, where  
9 do people go to school, what common  
10 transportation lines do you have, hospitals,  
11 healthcare, and that was memorialized in a  
12 document, the Communities of Interest Survey,  
13 that I've also submitted to your staff, which is  
14 the narrative that accompanies these neighborhood  
15 boundary lines.

16 I've also submitted the testimony of Bethany  
17 Lee, another staff member from AALDEF, that  
18 conducted a housing survey in Sunset Park and  
19 Bensonhurst as well as other neighborhoods in New  
20 York City, which makes the case why Sunset Park  
21 and Bensonhurst are so similar for our  
22 communities and why they should be together in  
23 one legislative district.

24 I've also submitted to the staff the current  
25 New York City Council District lines with each

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1 Asian American neighborhood boundaries overlaid.  
2 So you can see how the Asian-American community  
3 is divided into numerous City Council districts.  
4 AALDEF was involved in a litigation, federal  
5 litigation, regarding Congressional lines  
6 (inaudible) v. Cuomo, right here in the Eastern  
7 District of New York. We submitted these  
8 boundary lines, we submitted the Communities of  
9 Interest Survey in this federal litigation, and  
10 the Court adopted and was persuaded by our  
11 District lines. We worked with the  
12 African-American American community, the Center  
13 for Law & Social Justice, who you heard from  
14 earlier today; LatinoJustice, PRLDEF, as well as  
15 the National Institute for Latino Policy. So we  
16 worked with all the other communities of color,  
17 federally protected under the Voting Rights Act,  
18 to come up with a Unity Map with State Assembly,  
19 State Senate, and Congress. We were successful  
20 in our efforts. The Federal Court adopted our  
21 map. We will be coming out with a Unity Map for  
22 the City Council.

23 We humbly request that you pay attention to  
24 that map. It is an effort, a joint effort, by  
25 all the communities of color in New York City,

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1 and we are looking forward to working with this  
2 Commission to make sure that all the communities  
3 of color are fairly represented in the new New  
4 York City Council District lines.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Vattamala.

6 Our next speaker is Ernesto Vigoreaux of --  
7 representing himself.

8 MR. VIGOREAUX: Good evening, Commission,  
9 and everyone, fellow Brooklynites who are here  
10 today to voice your opinion on the redistricting,  
11 an important job that you have ahead of you, so I  
12 commend you for your public service taking the  
13 time to do this.

14 I am a simple homeowner. We live, my wife  
15 and I, and our children, we live on 4th Avenue,  
16 near Gowanus and Sunset Park area. Our first  
17 home, although I grew up in the South Bronx, I  
18 decided to make Brooklyn our home. I'm here just  
19 to reiterate my support for the cultural  
20 community and cultural fabric that we have in  
21 each of our neighborhoods in Brooklyn together.  
22 If in fact redistricting lines are developed, it  
23 would be great to see my children to be able to  
24 go to communities that have been kept intact  
25 where there is adequate political representation

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1 of these communities in our New City Council as  
2 we are redistricting them, as we're developing  
3 them now. So again I'm here as a homeowner  
4 humbly to voice my opinion on making sure that  
5 District lines are drawn in such a way that you  
6 ultimately will decide that protects communities,  
7 that protects culture, that protects a lot of  
8 folks that have been living there a long time,  
9 and you folks that have arrived that make up part  
10 of this new fabric. I myself, I'm half Latino  
11 and my mother is Asian. So for me, it would be  
12 great to continue to see a District that is  
13 represented by a Latino elected official in the  
14 areas of Sunset Park, while at the same time  
15 seeing for the first time an Asian elected  
16 representative in the new areas that are  
17 contiguous from Sunset Park and the northern part  
18 all the way through Bensonhurst connecting those  
19 two communities to bring about adequate  
20 representation that's reflective of the community  
21 that's there.

22 So again I wish you good luck. I know that  
23 you will look at the data closely, look at the  
24 new -- at the population data to come up with and  
25 arrive at the best conclusion possible that

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1 represents all of the people that live in the  
2 community, and gives each community its own voice  
3 of representation.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Vigoreaux.

5 Our next speaker is Christopher Kui. I hope  
6 I'm pronouncing that correctly.

7 MR. KUI: Not quite.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Asian Americans for  
9 Equality.

10 MR. KUI: Hi. My name is Christopher Kui.  
11 I'm the Executive Director of Asians for  
12 Equality, a citywide social services organization  
13 with housing development, homeownership, and  
14 small business development capabilities targeting  
15 main client base of New York City's Asian and  
16 Asian-American residents.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify  
18 before you. As a representative of Asian  
19 Americans for Equality, we have seen a tremendous  
20 increase of our Asian and Asian-American  
21 constituents in the Borough of Brooklyn so that  
22 throughout southern Brooklyn we are seeing  
23 neighborhoods of upwards of 40 percent increases  
24 in Asian residents, numbering roughly 284,000  
25 people in the latest Asian-American community

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1 survey.

2 In our study published last year called the  
3 This Thing Places (phonetic) share opportunity,  
4 which is of important, you know, that I'm handing  
5 out, we found that over one million Asian  
6 residents in the City almost 75 percent live in  
7 20 Community Board districts that have over 12  
8 percent Asian pluralities. In nine of these  
9 districts Asians made up more than 25 percent of  
10 the population. Within Brooklyn many  
11 neighborhoods fall within these 20 districts such  
12 as Sunset Park, Boro Park, Kensington and  
13 Midwood, just to name a few. In places like  
14 Bensonhurst, one in three residents are of Asian  
15 descent. Brooklyn's, Brooklyn Sunset Park is a  
16 U.S. Census data Asian neighborhood tabulation  
17 area with 53 percent of residents in Asian.  
18 Meanwhile, the opportunities for political  
19 representations have not kept pace with  
20 population growth with no elected official of  
21 Asian descent in Brooklyn when compared to  
22 Manhattan and Queens.

23 It is imperative that we allow such  
24 opportunity to arise by insuring that the  
25 Districts reflect changes in demographics so that

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1 all New Yorkers are adequately represented. With  
2 the Borough population of 284,000 and growing,  
3 Asian-American New Yorkers should have at least  
4 one or maybe two elected officials in Brooklyn in  
5 the coming decade. This -- however, this must  
6 not be done at the expense of our groups but  
7 achieve in an informed manner where Asians can  
8 have elected representation while protecting the  
9 political will and aspirations of other minority  
10 groups in the Borough. Haphazardly lumping  
11 Asians with other Asian and major plurality  
12 Districts will only force division and pit  
13 underrepresented groups against each other. A  
14 better path would be similar to what happened in  
15 lower Manhattan, where the previous Redistricting  
16 Commission, with tremendous foresight 20 years  
17 ago created three districts: 1, 2 and 3, so that  
18 major pluralities were able to achieve political  
19 representation without impinging on each other.  
20 Today, we have Margaret Chin, Rosa Mendez, and  
21 Christine Quinn. An Asian-American, a Latina,  
22 and a woman of LGBT background, representing the  
23 major demographic constituents without doing so  
24 at each other's expense. I'm almost done. So we  
25 are happy, do feel strongly that this is

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1           achievable for the City Council redistricting  
2           (inaudible) based on population study already  
3           done by New York-based Common Cause. We are  
4           seeing a tremendous increase in Asian residents  
5           in parts of Bensonhurst and its surrounding  
6           neighborhoods which can be made into Asian  
7           plurality districts much like Chinatown in  
8           Manhattan and Flushing in Queens. We urge the  
9           Commission to follow the examples set by the New  
10          York State Assembly recent Assembly in redrawing  
11          the boundaries of the 49th State Assembly  
12          District which composed a 51st -- 51 percent  
13          majority Asian district.

14                   CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Kui.

15                   MR. KUI: So in conclusion, in conclusion,  
16                   in closing, we just want to urge the Commission  
17                   to closely study and recognize the population  
18                   data, work diligently and creatively to ensure  
19                   that City Council representations, hopes, and  
20                   aspirations of 280,000, 280,000 Asian-Americans  
21                   living in Brooklyn can be fulfilled in the coming  
22                   decade. Thank you very much.

23                   CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We have your written  
24                   submission.

25                   MR. KUI: Thank you.

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1           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Our next speaker is Samuel  
2           Sieto?

3           MR. SIERRO: Sierro.

4           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sierro.

5           MR. SIERRO: Good evening, Commissioner,  
6           good evening Commission, and everyone in the  
7           room. Thank you for being with us this evening.  
8           I'll be brief. I represent no organization. I'm  
9           here strictly as a resident of District 38. I'm  
10          a lifelong resident of District 38, Sunset Park  
11          specifically. When I first moved there, there  
12          were kids in my class by the name of Olad, Spend  
13          (phonetic spellings). Okay, so now it's changed.  
14          As we went on, the Puerto Ricans came in, and so  
15          on, and so environment has changed, right? So in  
16          Sunset Park we have a pizzeria next door to a  
17          Chinese restaurant next to a gyro place and so  
18          on. We are a very diverse community in Sunset  
19          Park, and what we're seeking is if it's not  
20          broken we don't want to fix it. I think Sunset  
21          Park reflects the diversity, I think, of all New  
22          York. We're a small community. Anywhere you go  
23          you'll see Chinese, you'll see Puerto Rican,  
24          you'll see the whole spectrum of nations inside  
25          Sunset Park. And we're all being serviced, nobody

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1 is lacking in any service. The Chinese have the  
2 same issues as the Hispanic as the Arabic. We  
3 would ask that you keep that in consideration,  
4 and if you want things done right in the future  
5 we would ask that we allow the public to draw the  
6 lines, because the lines will be drawn based on  
7 the needs of the District and not the needs or  
8 the political aspirations of someone. That's all  
9 I have to say. Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you Mr. Sierro.

11 (The audience applauded.)

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Our next speaker is Gladys  
13 Bruno. Gladys Bruno.

14 MS. BRUNO: Good evening to all, and to the  
15 members of the Commission. My name is Gladys  
16 Bruno. I'm a member of CB 7. When I first moved  
17 to -- when I first moved into Sunset Park, to  
18 52nd Street between 7th and 8th Avenue in 1987,  
19 it was quiet, it was a quiet community. I am a  
20 witness to the change that has been taking place.  
21 When the Asian community started moving into  
22 Sunset Park it has really changed and come to  
23 life. Our diversity is what makes us special and  
24 different as a community. So why segregate? We  
25 have been learning from each other, living and

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1 learning from each other's cultures. It's a  
2 beautiful thing, so why change that? Why separate  
3 what we all learn from each other and have been  
4 living together for about the last 15 years?  
5 Thank you for considering my testimony.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is David Galarza?

8 MR. GALARZA: Good evening. My name is  
9 David Galarza. I'm am affiliated with  
10 (inaudible) Sunset Park project of Trinity  
11 Lutheran church. On August 4, 2012 we joined  
12 with members of Asian Americans for Equality and  
13 Common Cause for a workshop on this process. A  
14 process I might add that occurs every 10 years  
15 that seems to be rushed through what feels like  
16 10 minutes even in the general public mostly  
17 aware and I'm engaged. The men and women who  
18 participated in this forum are engaged and aware  
19 of this process. I had stressed at a press  
20 conference prior to the forum for at least  
21 (inaudible) after this exercise was less about  
22 who was going to be in office and more about  
23 holding whoever that person was accountable to  
24 our respective communities. The maps created from  
25 this exercise seem on the surface fair and indeed

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1 set a framework where we can begin a  
2 conversation, but both the Asian-American and  
3 Latino communities have grown substantially, and  
4 there's a real need to ensure both communities  
5 are respected, counted, and consulted in all  
6 matters of civic affairs. Obviously (inaudible)  
7 homogenous groups and since nuances of ethnic  
8 groups need to be taken into account, obviously  
9 we also need to take into account the protections  
10 afforded by the Voting Rights Act. As a Latino,  
11 I would be remiss if I didn't express my  
12 dissatisfaction, however, with the lack of  
13 representation of Latinos on this Commission.  
14 Latinos have had (inaudible) number of members on  
15 this body since 1990 even though the Latino  
16 community in the City has grown by 31 percent.  
17 We should have five members. I must also express  
18 my dissatisfaction of the timing of this process.  
19 If your stated goal is to make sure there's  
20 little to no real public participation, then by  
21 all means continue to schedule these meetings in  
22 the middle of the summer when most people are on  
23 vacation (inaudible). And in fact, if you really  
24 care about the democratic process and really want  
25 to engage and involve and include the myriad of

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1 voices that exist and should be heard in this  
2 metropolis, you should change the calendar and  
3 this process and devise a better system to  
4 include the myriad voices. I want to thank  
5 Common Cause for reaching out to La Casita, to  
6 our brothers and sisters within our  
7 Asian-American community, and for breaking bread  
8 with us and discussing the many ways our  
9 communities can and will work together. Sadly, it  
10 seems like this kind of exercise -- sadly this  
11 exercise sometimes some government bureaucrats  
12 are more apt to despise than to appreciate. As  
13 (inaudible) moves to adopting these new lines  
14 I'll repeat what our friend in the (inaudible)  
15 have offered how (inaudible) would this process  
16 be when party's, the Mayor, the Council, et  
17 cetera how transparent will the process be? Will  
18 there be meaningful public participation  
19 specifically among Latinos and communities of  
20 color will map of related technology be to all  
21 communities? Will the real reallocation of state  
22 prisoners to the original New York City addresses  
23 be implemented? We'll have those questions as  
24 well as many answers in the weeks and months  
25 ahead, and we will continue to work with groups

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1 like Common Cause, LatinoJustice, PRLDEF, AALDEF,  
2 and make sure these voices, desires, and  
3 democratic rights of all New Yorkers are  
4 respected, considered and implemented in this  
5 process. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank, Mr. Galarza.

7 Our next speaker will be Thomas Yu of the  
8 Asian Americans for Equality.

9 MR. YU: Thank you for the opportunity to  
10 speak. I'll keep my comments pretty brief,  
11 because you already heard from our Executive  
12 Director, Christopher Kui, earlier. He cited the  
13 numerous statistics that show the growth of Asian  
14 and Asian-American residents in many community  
15 District in Brooklyn. I won't go over that again.  
16 Just to reiterate, that we do feel that really  
17 the strength of this exercise is to really create  
18 the opportunity, not to bring an outcome, that is  
19 really creating an opportunity by redrawing of  
20 the lines; a plurality of people have the chance  
21 to elect one of their own or someone that they  
22 feel represents their ideas. We don't  
23 necessarily believe that it has to come at the  
24 expense of other groups in the community. For  
25 example, here some people discussing Sunset Park.

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1 We feel that, you know, Sunset Park may not be  
2 the best place for dividing two different groups  
3 whereas there are kind of lower-hanging fruit  
4 such as Bensonhurst. I think we must follow the  
5 demographic data, see where the residents are.  
6 This is really a no-brainer, and it really kind  
7 of draws (inaudible) so that's all I have to say,  
8 thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you Mr. Yu.

10 Our next speaker will be Michael Rockfarell?  
11 I'm sorry, Rockford.

12 MR. ROCHFORD: Closer.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: From the St. Nicks  
14 Alliance.

15 MR. ROCHFORD: Good evening, members of the  
16 Commission. Thank you so much for having me. My  
17 name is Michael Rochford. I'm from the Director  
18 of the St. Nicks Alliance. We're located in  
19 Greenpoint-Williamsburg, Brooklyn. As you might  
20 be aware, our community has seen a growth in  
21 population over the last 10 years, and so we are  
22 very concerned that as a result of that we might  
23 see a division of our Latino community,  
24 particularly in the south side and central in  
25 East Kingsborough communities. We've been a

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1 neighborhood that's divided amongst different  
2 Council Districts as well Congressional and  
3 Assembly Districts, and we appeal to you to  
4 remain -- maintain the cohesion within our  
5 communities so that we might have adequate  
6 representation, particularly as the economic  
7 increases in our community have tended to isolate  
8 people of lower moderate income means so that we  
9 request that you keep that in mind in considering  
10 new District lines within North Brooklyn. Thank  
11 you very much.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Rochford.

13 Our next speaker will be Jo-Ellen Sanders.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: She left, she left.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Dr. Tim Law.

16 DR. LAW: Yes. Good afternoon, ladies and  
17 gentlemen --

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Stand at the mic.

19 DR. LAW: My name is Dr. Law. I am hired the  
20 New York City Board of Education, which I work  
21 for 35 years and also a 40-year resident of  
22 Brooklyn, Bensonhurst. My remarks on New York  
23 City Council redistricting would be as follows.

24 Number one first. We have four New York City  
25 District in Bensonhurst: Dyker Heights,

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1 Gravesend and Sunset Park. That is 43, 44, 47 and  
2 50. I think it's really much. According to CUNY  
3 Center For Urban Research, the Asian population  
4 have further increased 57 percent and also 19,747  
5 poor people identified as Asians. Number two.  
6 That's the second, okay? That's the second.  
7 Because our cultural, language, and education or  
8 our language background, the Asian population are  
9 more, feel more comfortable in share, share in  
10 same communities and communicate with each other  
11 because they can understand each other is with  
12 there powers and also, they could understand and  
13 share information about our government, our  
14 benefits, entitlements, and education. And also,  
15 they go to work, schools or go other places.  
16 Most Asians, they want to settle down along a  
17 subway line, A line, E line, or F line, and where  
18 they can easily travel from Manhattan back to  
19 Brooklyn. Dyker Heights, Sunset Park, Graves  
20 End. And the other areas. Since 1990 more Asians,  
21 they moving to the school district. District 13,  
22 20, 21, 32. Why? Because, because this is school  
23 district can provide bilingual education, and  
24 provides DS program and provide music program and  
25 other -- and other classes. So I suggest that

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1 based on cultural, residents' cultural language,  
2 educational background, and also their cultural  
3 background, our reason to draw only three New  
4 York City District, City Council District instead  
5 of four. Can you based on that list, okay? This  
6 is my testimony. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you Dr. Law.

8 MR. LAW: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Our next speaker is Larry  
10 Morrish, Bay Ridge Community Council.

11 MR. MORRISH: First off, Brooklyn is the  
12 perfect place, right in the home of Brooklyn, so  
13 you picked the right place. You were all smart  
14 enough to give a good part to Brooklyn so we  
15 appreciate that. Would the people from Brooklyn  
16 raise your hands again? We got Carl from the  
17 Chamber, and one of the most distinguished  
18 members of this City Council, Tish James,  
19 monitored everything, so this is great.

20 I'm here on behalf the of the Bay Ridge  
21 Community Council. That's an umbrella  
22 organization of 110 organizations in Bay Ridge,  
23 Dyker Heights, and Bath Beach and Fort Hamilton,  
24 and I'm here to say that we want to keep  
25 everything as it is. We've been beat up enough

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1 through the years. We're very happy with what we  
2 currently have, and we appeal to you to leave it  
3 as is and support that. And the last thing to  
4 say. Seeing that the distinguished Senator from  
5 Queens, my dear friend, Col. Padavan, who is with  
6 my friend Chris Macom (phonetic spelling) for  
7 many years. Thank you Colonel, nice to see you.  
8 And thank you for your good work. God bless you.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Morrish.

10 That concludes the list of persons who  
11 signed up in advance to speak. If anyone else  
12 would like to speak may I suggest you just raise  
13 your hand and I'll call on you and you can state  
14 your name when you -- at the beginning and take  
15 three minutes.

16 MR. DREYFUS: My name is Richard Dreyfus. I  
17 am a retired senior. I live in Manhattan. I  
18 have a question for your staff, I guess. It's  
19 probably not applicable to the Charter. What I  
20 understand, the Districts have to be  
21 approximately equal in population. My question is  
22 has your staff done any analysis of the number of  
23 registered voters in each of the districts, and  
24 are there districts that have a higher proportion  
25 or a less proportion of registered voters even

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1           though there population is the same? And would  
2           that indicate a neighborhood where there is more  
3           non-citizens who can vote? Thank you.

4                   CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Anyone else?  
5                   Councilman Lander.

6                   MR. LANDER: Good evening, Chair Romano,  
7           Executive Director Hum, members of the  
8           Districting Commission, it's wonderful to see you  
9           all here in Brooklyn for the Commission.

10                   I'm Council Member Brad Lander. I'm very  
11           honored to represent the 39th District in  
12           Brooklyn. Most I've had, I just came in a few  
13           minutes ago, but I really wanted to make sure I  
14           had to listen to what people had to say. I'm  
15           proud that the process that we have really in my  
16           opinion is a model process for thinking about  
17           what the Districts should be, for listening to  
18           public testimony, for looking at the data,  
19           thinking about how we get really solid democratic  
20           representation, how we pay attention to the  
21           issues of equality and justice, so I'm glad to  
22           hear, to listen to people. I know people from  
23           the Asian community have come out to talk  
24           tonight. There are a lot of issues you're going  
25           to face in Brooklyn. I will mention two very

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1 very small issues that I don't think get to the  
2 large levels that some of the people have  
3 presented tonight. I know you'll hear the 39th  
4 is a wonderful District, like all its  
5 neighborhoods, I like every person in it, but  
6 just two sort of small issues that really relate  
7 to industrial areas and their relationship to the  
8 residential communities nearby, and I have some  
9 written testimony to provide on this as well.

10 The residential portion of the Columbia  
11 Street Waterfront neighborhood is in a separate  
12 District, the 39th, which I represent, from the  
13 portion that contains the active freight terminal  
14 on the waterfront in the 33rd, and many issues  
15 have come up in my tenure that require navigating  
16 across the issues that related to the Port's  
17 operation. The most tangible being that when the  
18 tarp came off the salt pile, all the salt from  
19 the Port blew across into the neighbors' yards,  
20 so those issues affecting the (inaudible) of the  
21 Port and industrial issues across the street. It  
22 was unified representation of the ports in the  
23 neighborhood across the street and similarly the  
24 Gowanus canal is cut apart from the 33rd, the  
25 38th and 39th District, which I represent, and

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1 this area faces many planning policies issues in  
2 the coming years. The EPA Superfund cleanup, the  
3 need to improve water quality there, and a whole  
4 set of land use and planning issues that are  
5 going to take us years to decide, and I believe  
6 that we would benefit from a more unified  
7 representation of the Gowanus Canal area in the  
8 Council District.

9 So I thank you for the opportunity to share  
10 those, two, some of the more narrow concerns.  
11 Most of all, I want to come out and say I  
12 appreciate the Council process, listen, the  
13 independent process setup is a good one, and I'm  
14 glad you're here in Brooklyn and listening to  
15 what people have to say and good luck. I know  
16 that the map, the changing demographics, and the  
17 priorities of New Yorkers will be challenged,  
18 balanced, but I look very forward to reviewing  
19 the work. Thank you again very much for this  
20 opportunity.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you Council Member.

22 Anyone else would like to speak, address the  
23 Commission.

24 Yes, sir.

25 MR. CORNEGY: I might have to adjust this a

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1 little bit.

2 (Laughter from the audience.)

3 Good afternoon, my name is Robert Cornegy,  
4 District Leader for the 56th Assembly District,  
5 which encompasses the 36 councilmanic district.

6 I just want to briefly remind the panel and  
7 everyone here of the longstanding history of  
8 Bedford-Stuyvesant as the largest  
9 African-American community, has been vibrant for  
10 decades, and is feeling the crunch of being  
11 encroached upon from other areas, and I'm asking  
12 that we keep it intact. It's the last bastion of  
13 African-American homeownership in the City, the  
14 last bastion of small business development, and  
15 African-American-owned businesses in the  
16 community. And we believe that any altering to  
17 the lines would severely impact on its growth and  
18 on its integrity as a community that has been  
19 largely African-American for its history. So  
20 most people know Bedford-Stuyvesant for being  
21 largely African-American and being second to  
22 Harlem in African-American population, but really  
23 there's been a shift in the demographics, and  
24 Bedford-Stuyvesant now is the largest in  
25 African-American homeownership, and its integrity

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1 is really being infringed upon. We want to make  
2 sure we keep its integrity intact. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Can I ask you to repeat  
4 your name again, sir?

5 MR. CORNEGY: Robert Cornegy. District  
6 Leader for the 56th Assembly District.  
7 C-O-R-N-E-G-Y.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

9 MR. CORNEGY: And with all respect to my  
10 father, Junior.

11 (The audience laughed and applauded.)

12 MR. NIEVES: Good evening distinguished  
13 panel. My name is Javier Nieves, former New York  
14 State Assemblyman many moons ago. I see Latisha  
15 James, whom I know very well, the great job that  
16 she's doing, but basically I just wanted to step  
17 up here. I've participated in this process many  
18 moons ago also, when the redistricting panel had  
19 gotten together, Macciarolla, and participated in  
20 the drawing of the lines for the Puerto Rican  
21 Legal Defense Fund. And -- but with the current  
22 or the proposed 38th Council Seat the lines of  
23 advocacy, life-long resident of Sunset Park and  
24 Brooklyn, and from what I've seen there's just  
25 one issue that I just want to add to it that you

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1 consider. There used to be sort of an arm  
2 sticking out of the 38th Council District along  
3 the waterfront along Columbia Street. I would  
4 urge you to consider that that is contrary to  
5 belief that Spanish Harlem, el Barrio, was the  
6 cradle of the Puerto Rican migration, and  
7 although many went there, it was Columbia Street  
8 where the marine tide and the Gowanus Canal ships  
9 used to dock, and that was the first Puerto Rican  
10 community in the United States at the turn of the  
11 century and for many, many years, and that you  
12 consider keeping that contiguous to the 38th  
13 Council Seat. Thank you very much for your time.

14 (The audience applauded.)

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

16 Would anyone else like to address the  
17 Commission?

18 (Silence.)

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right. That concludes  
20 our first public hearing.

21 (The audience applauded.)

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Next, our next public  
23 hearing will be in Manhattan at New York Law  
24 School on Thursday, this Thursday, August 16, 5  
25 P.M. to 9 P.M., that's 185 West Broadway in lower

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1 Manhattan. We hope to see some of you there, and  
2 thank you very much for coming this evening.

3 (Whereupon, at 6:57 P.M., the above matter  
4 concluded.)

5

6 I, NORAH COLTON, CM, a Notary Public for and  
7 within the State of New York, do hereby certify  
8 that the above is a correct transcription of my  
9 stenographic notes.

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NORAH COLTON, CM

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