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CITY OF NEW YORK  
2012-2013 DISTRICTING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC MEETING  
Queens Public Library  
41-17 Main Street  
Flushing, New York 11355  
August 21, 2012  
5:10 P.M.

- IN ATTENDANCE:
- JUSTIN YU
  - JOHN ROBERT
  - ROXANNE J. PERSAUD
  - GLORIA CARVAJAL WOLFE
  - MADELINE PROVENZANO
  - LINDA LIN
  - BENITO ROMANO, Chair
  - JAMILA PONTON BRAGG
  - OSCAR ODOM, III
  - FRANK PADAVAN
  - SCOTT CERULLO
  - KAMILLAH M. HANKS
  - THOMAS V. OGNIBENE

## DISTRICTING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

1 MR. ROMANO: Good evening, everyone. My  
2 name is Benito Romano. I am the chair of the New  
3 York City Districting Commission. Thank you for  
4 coming tonight and welcome to the New York City  
5 Districting Commission's public hearing.

6 A special thanks to Tom Galante who is the  
7 president and CEO of this beautiful library, and  
8 Donna Ciampa, who is its manager. I think we are  
9 going to hear from Donna for a moment. She wants  
10 to say a word or two, and then we will hear from  
11 Hugh Weinberg, counsel to Borough President Helen  
12 Marshall.

13 MS. CIAMPA-LAURIA: Good evening, everyone.  
14 My name is Donna Ciampa-Lauria and I am the  
15 director of the Queens Library of Flushing.  
16 Queens Library serves over two million people at  
17 62 locations and circulates among the highest  
18 number of books and other library materials in  
19 the country.

20 Libraries have long played an important role  
21 in the civic life of their communities and  
22 organizations, and the Queens Library is no  
23 exception. As a representative of the Queens  
24 Library, I am pleased to host an event of such  
25 civic importance. I would like to welcome all of

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1 and you invite you, when you have some time, to  
2 take a look around at some of the great  
3 resources, programs and services that we have  
4 available. Thank you, welcome. Welcome  
5 (applause).

6 MR. WEINBERG: Good evening. I am Hugh  
7 Weinberg. I am counsel of Queens Borough  
8 President Helen Marshall. She regrets very much  
9 not being able to be here tonight. But she has  
10 asked me to come and deliver her testimony for  
11 her.

12 First of all, we would just like to thank  
13 Tom Galante, the head of the Queens Library  
14 system, and Donna Ciampa-Lauria for making this  
15 beautiful library available for this important  
16 event. And now, I would just like to, if I may,  
17 just read as written the Borough President's  
18 testimony.

19 So, when I refer to "myself" in the first  
20 person as Borough President, you don't mistakenly  
21 think I am the Borough President (laughter). I  
22 got a little laugh, anyway (laughter).

23 (Reading): "Good evening, and welcome  
24 Mr. Chairman and all of your colleagues from the  
25 New York City Districting Commission to the great

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1 Borough of Queens. Of course, several Commission  
2 Members come from Queens, including former State  
3 Senator Frank Padavan and former Councilman Tom  
4 Ognibene. It's good to know that our borough is  
5 well represented in the districting process.

6 As the Queens Borough President, I am  
7 grateful for the opportunity to address the  
8 Commission as it embarks on its important mission  
9 to determine the proper configuration of New York  
10 City's City Council districts.

11 As we all know, fairly drawn representative  
12 election districts are an essential component to  
13 ensuring that our right to vote, one of our most  
14 precious constitutional rights, actually means  
15 something. I trust that this commission will  
16 give in-depth and detailed consideration to the  
17 drawing of new legislative districts for the  
18 City, while of course, taking account the needs  
19 of our residents.

20 I have to admit that, after seeing the  
21 ordeal that the people of the State of New York  
22 went through during the State legislative  
23 redistricting process, I am a little concerned  
24 about how this process will turn out. However,  
25 the Mayor and the City Council have convened an

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1 impressive group of individuals to serve on this  
2 commission.

3 I look forward to its proposals for new  
4 districts. In coming up with your proposes, I  
5 ask that you keep a number of factors in mind.  
6 As you know, Queens has the second-largest and  
7 most diverse population of any county in the  
8 state, in terms of nationalities, ethnicities and  
9 religions represented. We have more than  
10 2.2 million people here.

11 For the record, however, we believe that the  
12 Census Bureau undercounted the population of  
13 Queens by more than 100,000 people during the  
14 2010 Census. Queens is, of course, a borough of  
15 many separate and district neighborhoods. Our  
16 people live in dozens of communities. And when  
17 you ask where we come from, we of course say we  
18 are from Queens.

19 However, we also make sure to tell you what  
20 communities we are from. In fact, Queens is the  
21 only borough where, when we receive mail, it's  
22 addressed to us in our individual neighborhood.  
23 So, when we receive mail, rather than being  
24 addresses to "Queens," it's addressed to "Long  
25 Island City," "Glendale," "Bayside," "Little

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1 Neck," "Forest Hills," "Jamaica" or any one of  
2 dozens of other communities.

3 We proudly identify ourselves with  
4 neighborhoods and rich cultures and history. In  
5 light of the unique nature of Queens and its  
6 communities, it is especially important that when  
7 any entity is charged with redrawing legislation  
8 districts, special care must be taken.

9 We need to ensure that communities remain  
10 intact and that every vote counts. As this  
11 redistricting process begins, we expect that any  
12 proposed new legislative districts will respect  
13 the integrity of our communities and protect the  
14 voting rights of our minority populations.

15 I ask that, as you undertake this task, you  
16 learn from and therefore avoid some of the  
17 mistakes made by the State's legislative  
18 redistricting LATFOR in its initial proposals.  
19 Let me take just a few minutes to remind you, for  
20 example, in some cases, the proposed lines seemed  
21 arbitrarily drawn. In other cases, it looked as  
22 though someone was trying to solve a jigsaw  
23 puzzle by jamming pieces into places they didn't  
24 belong.

25 While I am sure you are aware of many of the

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1 criticisms expressed during the State districting  
2 process, they reflect the valid concerns and are  
3 worth repeating here. I remind you that black,  
4 Latino and Asian-American natives and groups have  
5 expressed concerns about underrepresentation in  
6 many parts of the city, including, of course, in  
7 Queens.

8 The initial State restricting proposals  
9 showed a clear lack of respect for community  
10 lines and they would have divided communities by,  
11 among other things, crossing natural boundaries,  
12 including major roads and highways. In fact, the  
13 new districts would have divided communities in  
14 Elmhurst, Woodhaven, Astoria and many others, and  
15 would have jeopardized the legislation they  
16 deserve.

17 For examples, in Woodhaven, some of its  
18 residents would have been in the same district as  
19 Astoria, which is nearly on the other side of the  
20 borough. Other Woodhaven residents would have  
21 been in a district that stretches to Green Acres  
22 Mall and Nassau County. Under those plans, parts  
23 of Woodhaven would have been represented by three  
24 different state senators rather than one senator,  
25 for whom the communities would no doubt be a

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1 bigger priority.

2 The proposed district map even appear to  
3 show, and I really found this hard to believe,  
4 that part of LeFrak City would have been carved  
5 out and put in a separate district. Also  
6 disturbing was the proposed mutilation of the  
7 venerable Astoria neighborhood. The new line  
8 would have cut off District 12 several blocks  
9 south of the old boundary at 20th Avenue and  
10 would put one side of Ditmars in one district and  
11 the other side in another."

12 Again, these are examples from the State  
13 redistricting process and by are no means, in no  
14 way meant to imply that this commission would be  
15 subject to the same problems.

16 (Reading): "I was alarmed because that  
17 seemingly arbitrary and illogically redrawing of  
18 district lines could have only led to diminished  
19 representation for Queens communities.  
20 Redistricting should protect our neighborhoods by  
21 ensuring cohesive representation. That is the  
22 most effective way to guarantee that lawmakers  
23 will respond to communities' needs.

24 And in this era of limited resources, with  
25 critical issues such as education, transportation

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1 and medical care looming larger by the day, we  
2 need the best representation we can get. Our  
3 right to vote is one of our most basic and  
4 cherished rights, and any actions that impact  
5 that right must be taken with the utmost care. I  
6 therefore urge you to immerse yourself in a study  
7 of our communities and design district maps that  
8 are fair, balanced and truly representative.

9 On behalf of the people of Queens, I insist  
10 that any changes to our city's legislative  
11 districts must acknowledge and accommodate the  
12 distinct diverse qualities of its dozens of  
13 communities. I thank you again for coming to  
14 Queens and hearing our residents and to take heed  
15 of their concerns. Thank you."

16 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Weinberg.  
17 (Applause.) Now, we have this facility until  
18 9:00 and I want to make sure that we hear from  
19 everyone who is signed up. For those of you who  
20 did not sign up and wish to speak, please see one  
21 of the districting commission staff. Jonathan  
22 Ettricks is around. Shirley Limongi is also with  
23 us, and Brian Flynn, the director of operations.

24 Additionally, if you require translation of  
25 your statement, please let staff at the

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1 registration desk outside now. They will ensure  
2 that a translator will be provided when it is  
3 your turn to speak. Before we begin to take  
4 testimony, I would like to make a few opening  
5 comments.

6 At the beginning of August, the Commission  
7 advertised in community and ethnic newspapers  
8 announcing the Commission's public hearing  
9 schedule. An e-mail blast was sent ultimately to  
10 over 50,000 recipients. Various advocacy groups  
11 helped spread the word through their individual  
12 networks and the hearing schedule was advertised  
13 on our Facebook and Twitter feed.

14 From the look of this room, we have been  
15 successful in reaching many of you.  
16 Nevertheless, as we go forward in this process,  
17 we will seek other additional ways to maximize  
18 your participation.

19 Tonight, we continue in the first phase of  
20 the New York City districting process as laid out  
21 in our New York City Charter. After the  
22 Commission holds public hearings in each of the  
23 five boroughs, the Commission will meet again  
24 this Friday at 1:00 P.M. at the City Council  
25 Chambers in City Hall to discuss what we have

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1 learned through this process.

2 At this August 24th Commission meeting, we  
3 will direct the staff to create a preliminary  
4 district plan according to the Commission's  
5 instructions. On September 4th, at 1:00 P.M. at  
6 this Council Chambers in City Hall, the  
7 Commission will meet again, this time to review  
8 and adopt the preliminary district plan that will  
9 then be made available for public inspection and  
10 comment.

11 Please note that both these meetings will be  
12 open to the public, but there will not be any  
13 opportunity for the public to speak or make  
14 comments. The public will have an opportunity to  
15 comment on this preliminary district plan during  
16 the second round of public hearings held  
17 throughout the five boroughs from 5:00 to  
18 9:00 P.M. on October 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 10th and  
19 11th.

20 We are still trying to determine the  
21 locations, but they will be different ones from  
22 the ones previously used in order to maximize  
23 opportunities for your anticipation. Comments  
24 from this round of public hearings will then be  
25 considered during the stated Commission meetings

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1 stated for October 18th, where staff will once  
2 again be directed to revise the preliminary  
3 district plan in response to the comments that we  
4 receive. After the next stated Commission  
5 meeting on October 30th, the revised plan will be  
6 presented, considered and adopted by the  
7 Commission.

8 By November 5th, this revised plan will then  
9 be delivered to the City Council for its  
10 inspection and approval. According to the City  
11 Charter, by November 27th, the Council must  
12 either adopt the revise the district plan, at  
13 which point the plan reasonably filed with the  
14 City Clerk or the Council can object to the  
15 revised district plan, in which case the plan  
16 will be returned to the Commission with the  
17 Council's comments and objections.

18 The Commission then will have until January  
19 5, 2013 to create a revised plan. This will then  
20 set the stage for a new set of public hearings,  
21 which has been tentatively scheduled for  
22 January 28th to February 8th, again in each of  
23 the five boroughs. Again, we aim to have these  
24 hearings in different locations from the prior  
25 two rounds of public hearings to maximize

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1 opportunities for public participation.

2 The Commission will then have until  
3 March 5th to create, adopt and submit a final  
4 plan to the City Clerk and to the U.S. Department  
5 of Justice for Voting Rights Act Section V  
6 preclearance. This process is described in a  
7 flow chart that is available for you tonight.

8 Another handout that is available are two  
9 maps. One map is of the five boroughs with the  
10 current City Council district, and another is the  
11 map of Queens with the borough's current City  
12 Council district lines. Both maps include the  
13 total population within the districts.

14 The population figures reflected in the  
15 handouts have already been adjusted to reflect  
16 prisoners serving State sentences, but having  
17 residences within the representative council  
18 districts as of the time of the taking of the  
19 U.S. Census in 2010. The Commission will take  
20 these figures into consideration when drawing  
21 district lines.

22 It's also important to keep in mind, as we  
23 conduct these public hearings that we are not  
24 writing on a blank slate, but are operating  
25 within an established legal framework. We are

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1           legally required to consider during the  
2           districting process the following. The total  
3           population difference of any district cannot be  
4           greater than 10 percent of the average population  
5           for all districts.

6           District lines should ensure fair and  
7           effective representation of racial and language  
8           minority groups in New York City. The lines  
9           should keep neighborhoods and communities with  
10          established ties of common interest and  
11          association intact. Districts should be intact  
12          and contiguous. Districts should not cross  
13          borough boundaries, if at all possible.

14          And districts should avoid diminishing the  
15          effective representation of voters. Finally, I  
16          want to bring to your attention our website,  
17          www.nyc.gov/districting. The site is the central  
18          repository of all documents and videos relating  
19          to the Districting Commission.

20          It also contains a complete schedule of our  
21          public hearings and a portal where you can  
22          preregister for all hearings and be added to our  
23          mailing list. I hope you will visit the site and  
24          let us know if it can be made more informative  
25          and interactive.

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1           One final note. We have many speakers  
2           tonight. Each of you has three minutes, which is  
3           not very long. Keep in mind we already have a  
4           substantial amount of data from the U.S. Census  
5           and elsewhere. We will welcome and will  
6           carefully read all your written submissions. All  
7           of this data is important to our decision.

8           But your testimony at these hearings is  
9           especially critical. In your remarks, tell us  
10          about your neighborhoods. Where are its natural  
11          boundaries as you see them? So that we can  
12          follow your comments more carefully, please tell  
13          us what council district you are concerned about  
14          and how, if at all, you would like to see it  
15          changed.

16          Again, thank you for participating in this  
17          important event tonight. At this point, we will  
18          have the commissioners introduce themselves and  
19          then we will hear from our first witness,  
20          starting at this end.

21                 MR. YU: Justin Yu from Manhattan. Flushing  
22                 was my first home when I came to the United  
23                 States.

24                 MR. ROBERT: John Robert from the Bronx.

25                 MS. PERSAUD: Roxanne Persaud representing

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1 Brooklyn.

2 MS. WOLFE: Gloria Wolfe, Manhattan.

3 MS. PROVENZANO: Madeline Provenzano from  
4 the Bronx.

5 MS. LIN: Linda Lin from Queens.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: I am Thaddeus Hackworth,  
7 staff to the Commission.

8 MR. HUM: Carl Hum, staff to the Commission.

9 MS. BRAGG: Jamila Ponton Bragg, Manhattan.

10 MR. ODOM: Oscar Odom III, Brooklyn.

11 MR. PADAVAN: Frank Padavan, Queens.

12 MR. CERULLO: Scott Cerullo, Staten Island.

13 MS. HANKS: Kamillah Hanks, Staten Island.

14 MR. OGNIBENE: Thomas Ognibene, Queens  
15 County.

16 MR. HACKWORTH: The first speaker will be  
17 James Hong followed by Steven Choi. (Applause.)

18 MR. HONG: Thank you and good afternoon  
19 districting Commission Members, staff and  
20 concerned citizens of Queens. My name is James  
21 Hong and I am here speaking on behalf of AACCRD,  
22 the Asian-American Community Coalition on  
23 Redistricting and Democracy.

24 AACCRD is a nonpartisan, pan-Asian coalition  
25 of 14 organizations across the city. We are

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1 committed to advancing the opportunity of Asian  
2 Americans and minority communities to  
3 meaningfully participate in the political  
4 process.

5 I just want to say it's good to see you all  
6 again. I want to just at this moment invite  
7 AACCRD members and our allies to stand and show  
8 the Commission what we want for Queens.

9 And as a coalition, we urge the Commission  
10 today not to approach the task of redistricting  
11 as merely one of equalizing the population among  
12 districts, by our own city's charter, our city  
13 lines should reflect our communities of interest.  
14 This will require thoughtful consideration of  
15 demographics and community input and ultimately,  
16 whether the district lines will account for and  
17 respect what are dramatic changes underneath a  
18 seemingly modest 2.1 percent increase in citywide  
19 population.

20 For example, the Asian-American population  
21 in Queens grew 30.6 percent between 2000 and  
22 2010. There are now over one million Asian  
23 Americans in this -- half a million Asian  
24 Americans in this borough, and they are  
25 22.8 percent of its population.

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1           Just to put it in perspective, fully half of  
2 New York City's Asian-American population resides  
3 in Queens today. Our member organizations will  
4 speak more specifically to certain neighborhoods.  
5 However, we want to point out two areas that need  
6 significant changes.

7           Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park and Bayside.  
8 First, we consider Richmond Hill and South Ozone  
9 Park to be a single community of interest. And  
10 currently, voters that are divided and thus  
11 diluted between four elected officials.

12           This area should be united within a single  
13 district and thus given meaningful  
14 representation. Second, the neighborhood of  
15 Bayside is also divided. And while much of it  
16 falls into District 19, the southern portion of  
17 the neighborhood falls into District 23.

18           This area, also known as Oakland Gardens,  
19 should be joined into District 19. The residents  
20 of Oakland Gardens often identify themselves as  
21 living in Bayside. And for definitions of these  
22 neighborhoods, we refer you to AALDEF's community  
23 survey.

24           With regards to other significant  
25 neighborhoods for the Asian-American community,

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1 the current districts lines in Elmhurst, Jackson  
2 Heights and Woodside do not reflect the  
3 communities of interest there and should be  
4 reconfigured. The neighborhood clusters of  
5 Bellerose, Floral Park, Queens Village and Glen  
6 Oaks are currently all kept and this should not  
7 changed.

8 Briarwood and Jamaica Hills should also stay  
9 together and intact. (Timer dings.) Finally,  
10 Flushing and Murray Hill and Queensboro Hill are  
11 largely kept whole within a single district and  
12 this should not change. We look forward to a  
13 draft from the Commission that brings an equal  
14 voice to the Asian-American residents and voters  
15 of Queens and all of New York City. Thank you.

16 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Hong.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
19 Steven Choi, to be followed by Bright Limm.

20 MR. CHOI: Good afternoon. My name is  
21 Steven Choi and I am the executive director of  
22 the MinKwon Center for Community Action. I am  
23 here to discuss our interest in the redrawing of  
24 the City Council districts by this Commission.  
25 Since our founding in 1984, the MinKwon Center

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1 has had a profound presence in the  
2 Korean-American, Asian-American and other  
3 marginalized communities.

4 We are based in the heart of Flushing and  
5 our goals are to educate and organize our  
6 communities, including the Korean-American  
7 community, to provide critically needed services,  
8 to increase Korean American civic participation,  
9 to built youth leadership and preserve our  
10 cultural groups.

11 The MinKwon Center is committed to civic  
12 engagement of our communities. Many of our  
13 community voters are disenfranchised. Our voters  
14 are confused by complicated procedures, denied  
15 in-language materials and unlawfully harassed at  
16 the polls.

17 So, the MinKwon Center works to empower  
18 voters from the start of the electoral process to  
19 the finish, registering voters, educating them,  
20 mobilizing them to vote and then protecting them  
21 at the polls. We are completely nonpartisan and  
22 independent of any politicians or parties. Our  
23 goal is to help our communities build power, have  
24 a strong voice in community issues and then hold  
25 elected officials accountable.

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1           And we believe that redistricting is a  
2           critical civic engagement issue. In previous  
3           years, districts have not followed natural  
4           community boundaries, were only drawn to help  
5           incumbents and have diluted the votes of  
6           minorities.

7           But if districts are drawn properly, that  
8           take into account natural communities of  
9           interest, respects the voting rights and adheres  
10          to the principle of one person/one vote, then we  
11          are rewarded with competitive elections,  
12          accountable politicians and protection of  
13          disenfranchised minorities.

14          And this is critical for the Asian-American  
15          community, which has grown by more than  
16          30 percent since 2000. 19 City Council members  
17          of districts for Asian Americans make up more  
18          than 15 percent of their constituents, and yet  
19          many of these City Council members are unaware of  
20          their needs and concerns. So, this Commission  
21          must engage the community in a robust public  
22          debate.

23          The MinKwon Center is committed to working  
24          with AACCRD, the Asian-American Community  
25          Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy, to

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1 educate our community members, engage them and  
2 advocate for our community's interest.

3 Our recommendations today relate to the  
4 Flushing and Bayside communities and neighborhood  
5 boundaries to be bound together with the Asian  
6 American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and  
7 these will be submitted as well.

8 For Flushing, we recognize that this  
9 community is bordered on the west by the Van Wyck  
10 Expressway, the north by 32nd Avenue and 27th  
11 Avenue, the east by Utopia Parkway and 189th  
12 Street and the south by the Long Island  
13 Expressway, represents a true community of  
14 interest.

15 Flushing residents share many common  
16 characteristics. A majority are immigrants,  
17 mostly from Asia, for whom language access is a  
18 key issue, and this community has become one of  
19 the largest immigrant gateways in New York City.

20 Bayside, as we define it, is bordered on the  
21 west by the Clearview Expressway, the north by  
22 33rd Avenue and 33rd Road, the east by the Cross  
23 Island Parkway and the south by 73rd Avenue, is  
24 also another community of interest. The greater  
25 Bayside area is home to a large and growing

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1 Korean-American community and we believe that  
2 this specifically -- (timer dings) -- includes  
3 the Oakland Gardens part of this community.

4 So, together with our AACCRD Coalition  
5 partners, we will continue to advocate for our  
6 communities throughout the entire redistricting  
7 process to ensure that our communities are heard  
8 and that our political rights are protected.  
9 Thank you.

10 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Choi (applause).

11 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
12 Bright Limm, to be followed by Leela Maret.

13 MR. LIMM: Hello. I would like to just  
14 begin by first thanking the Commission for  
15 scheduling this hearing at a time when many of  
16 our community members could make it. Thank you  
17 very much.

18 My name is Bright Limm and I am testifying  
19 today as board president and steering committee  
20 chair of Korean Americans for Political  
21 Advancement, or KAPA. The recommendations I will  
22 present today at today's hearings concerning both  
23 guiding principles and adjustments to Council  
24 Districts 19, 20 and 23. KAPA is a nonprofit  
25 advocacy and political organization with

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1 dues-paying members residing predominantly in  
2 Queens and Manhattan.

3 Thorough our advocacy and political  
4 activities, we have knocked on thousands of doors  
5 throughout northeastern Queens, particularly in  
6 Flushing, Bayside, Murray Hill, Auburndale, Fresh  
7 Meadows, and we have met with elected officials,  
8 business associations and other community leaders  
9 throughout this region.

10 Restricting is a priority policy area for  
11 KAPA and for over a year, we have worked together  
12 with over a dozen organizations on State  
13 legislative and congressional districting matters  
14 as a member organization of AACCRD, which you are  
15 familiar with. KAPA now joins with its fellow  
16 AACCRD members to advocate for fair City Council  
17 districts.

18 So first with regard to guiding principles,  
19 KAPA recognizes that the Districting Commission's  
20 top consideration must be one of compliance with  
21 existing legal mandates. Now, within this legal  
22 framework, KAPA beliefs that the next important  
23 consideration should be the identification and  
24 the protection of communities of interest.

25 In order to identify communities of common

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1 interest, specifically northern Queens, KAPA  
2 believes that common languages, socioeconomic,  
3 housing, citizenship or immigration status and  
4 commercial characteristics of these neighborhoods  
5 ought to be afforded the greatest weight.

6 Now, KAPA strongly recommends that the  
7 Commission utilize the excellent fieldwork and  
8 analysis performed by the Asian American Legal  
9 Defense and Education Fund, AALDEF, which is also  
10 a member of the organization of the AACCRD  
11 coalition.

12 KAPA has had an opportunity to see and  
13 advance the findings and analysis provided by  
14 AALDEF, including at the Brooklyn hearing, and we  
15 find its methodology to be rigorous and its  
16 conclusions fully in AACCRD with KAPA's own  
17 demographic analysis and fieldwork.

18 Now, with regard to Council Districts 19, 20  
19 and 23, KAPA's positions are very  
20 straightforward. We simply ask that the  
21 Commission draw these three districts in such a  
22 way that, one, Flushing as defined in AALDEF's  
23 Asian-American neighborhood boundaries document  
24 is kept within one council district, in other  
25 words, Council District 20, and number two,

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1 Bayside as defined in that same document, we ask  
2 that it be kept within one Council District,  
3 i.e., Council District 9.

4 Now, I should point out specifically that,  
5 under the neighborhood boundaries document, that  
6 small neighborhood of Oakland Gardens is included  
7 as part of the Bayside community of interest. We  
8 believe that it should be part of the 19th  
9 District for a number of reasons. I see I am  
10 running out of time, so I will just say that I  
11 will be submitting written testimony with those  
12 reasons (timer dings). Thank you very much.

13 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Limm (applause).

14 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
15 Leela Maret, followed by Richard David.

16 MS. MARET: Good evening. My name is Leela  
17 Maret. I am the secretary of the Local 375 DC  
18 37, for the last ten years, and the delegate to  
19 DC 37, the largest municipal union in the city,  
20 representing 125,000 members, the City employees,  
21 nurses, crossing guards, engineers, clubs,  
22 teachers, police officers, firefighters who make  
23 the City work day by day.

24 I am a community activist and vice president  
25 of the Indian Association of North America and

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1 Canada and I lived in Richmond Hill for the last  
2 20 years. Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park are  
3 also a community of interest that continues to be  
4 divided by four City councils districts.

5 It is a continuous area of people of common  
6 interest, culture and heritage. This community  
7 is disenfranchised, chopped up and fragmented.  
8 The community consists of Punjabis,  
9 Indo-Caribbeans, group of same origin and  
10 background. We also congregate in the same  
11 places of worship. Heavily populated  
12 (unintelligible) and are disposed. The children  
13 go to the same high schools, John Adams and  
14 Richmond Hill, share common country of origin,  
15 dialect and language.

16 We have opened up small businesses in  
17 Richmond Hill that reflect our culture. We run  
18 countless shops and we have countless ethnic  
19 garment stores in the area. We have local  
20 newspapers, West Indian, Caribbean, North Indian  
21 and host radio programs to the needs-offered  
22 community and share community services and  
23 organization.

24 We identify as Americans who can trace our  
25 ancestry back to South Asia. We do not have

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1 health clinics, community centers, day care  
2 centers, senior centers, social service centers  
3 or even job training centers in Richmond Hill,  
4 the most important family policy, urban policy,  
5 foreign policy, labor policy to have and ensure  
6 representation by our people.

7 We are a vital part of the economic engine  
8 of New York. We are asking for the opportunity  
9 to become part of the mechanics of being  
10 American. We humbly request the Commission to  
11 show us some respect and keep us together in  
12 one district.

13 We do not have any South Asian elected  
14 officials so far to the City Council. We would  
15 like to have a piece of pie, too. We are one of  
16 the fastest growing ethnic populations. Richmond  
17 Hill and South Ozone Park community should be  
18 kept as one district -- (timer dings) -- as it  
19 functions as one neighborhood.

20 It should be unified into one community that  
21 must be kept together and not splintered. Within  
22 each community throughout the system is a  
23 vibrancy, civic, historic, cultural richness of  
24 many diverse groups, and deserve to be preserved  
25 through political involvement. The proposed map

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1 is attached for the Commissioners' consideration.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

4 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Richard  
5 David, to be followed by Linda Lee.

6 MR. DAVID: Good afternoon. My name is  
7 Richard David. I am the executive director of  
8 the Indo-Caribbean Alliance. We are based in  
9 Richmond Hill, Queens and we are happy to be here  
10 today. It's not an easy journey to get from  
11 South Queens to North Queens. (Applause.)

12 The Indo-Caribbean Alliance provides  
13 programs and services to residents in South  
14 Queens, services that we believe lack in the  
15 community currently. We provide mentoring  
16 program to youths. You will hear from one of our  
17 youth later on today.

18 We provide civic assistance helping people  
19 register to vote and actually making sure that  
20 they get assistance at the voting booth. We also  
21 helped in the 2010 Census making sure people  
22 complete their forms in one of the lowest  
23 response rate districts in New York City.

24 One of the problems we face with residents  
25 in that area is they don't identify themselves

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1 with any of the options that are on the forms.  
2 We believe, though, that even with the responses,  
3 that residents in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park  
4 and Ozone Park are a community of interest and  
5 they should be kept together in any map that this  
6 Commission puts together.

7 One of the reasons that you are going to see  
8 a lot of signs and a lot of people from South  
9 Queens trekking up here today is because we are  
10 feeling a sense of frustration. We believe, and  
11 it's been apparent, that the system has been  
12 designed in a way to disenfranchise us.  
13 Indo-Caribbeans have been in this country since  
14 the 1960s.

15 A lot of us are raising our children here as  
16 second- and third-generation Americans, yet we  
17 have been disenfranchised. Districts 32, 28 and  
18 27 reflect that disenfranchisement.

19 We are asking you today to keep these  
20 communities of interest together. Last year, one  
21 of the projects we worked on was, we helped over  
22 500 small businesses in South Ozone Park relocate  
23 because the casino at Aqueduct Racetrack was  
24 moving in. Over 500 small business owners of  
25 South Asian and Indo-Caribbean origin were

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1 displaced because of this.

2 But you are not going to hear about it  
3 because our elected officials currently do not  
4 represent the interests of the residents who are  
5 there. We believe that fairer district lines  
6 will provide for fair representation to residents  
7 in this community.

8 I unfortunately do not know any of the  
9 Commission Members. But I respect each you and I  
10 request that each you take a trip out to South  
11 Queens and I am convinced that you will be  
12 compelled to keep this community together because  
13 of what you are going to see on the ground. And  
14 the Indo-Caribbean Alliance is a member of AACCRD  
15 and we support the maps that they have submitted  
16 and we are very happy to be here today. Thank  
17 you very much.

18 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Linda  
20 Lee, to be followed by Ken Cohen.

21 MS. LEE: Hi, good evening everyone. Thank  
22 you again for having us all here today and to be  
23 able to voice our opinions. This is definitely  
24 no easy task, and so we appreciate that all of  
25 you are here listening to what we have to say.

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1 I am the executive director at KCS, which is  
2 Korean Community Services. We have been around  
3 since 1973, so we have a lot of history in this  
4 great city. And we offer a lot of multi-social  
5 services, including two senior centers, a public  
6 health research center in Manhattan as well as a  
7 Brooklyn site office.

8 And we offer lots of social services for the  
9 immigrant community, including ESL classes and  
10 job training for seniors as well. We are today  
11 mainly to speak on behalf of our community  
12 members that sort of are mainly in the northern  
13 Flushing area, from northern Queens area, sorry,  
14 from Flushing all the way out to the east where  
15 Little Neck is.

16 And like others have said, we would ask and  
17 urge the districting Commission to keep  
18 neighborhoods of Flushing together in the  
19 boundaries that Steve Choi had previously  
20 mentioned that are according to AALDEF's  
21 community maps as well as Bayside.

22 I actually personally live in Oakland  
23 Gardens, and it's interesting, because whenever I  
24 buy things online, for example, and they ask you  
25 to type in your address, I always put in

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1 "Bayside" and it recognizes my address as  
2 Bayside, even though technically it's Oakland  
3 Gardens.

4 And you know, even the mailings that I  
5 receive for the most part say "Bayside, New  
6 York." And I think most of the community members  
7 that live in that area would probably agree that  
8 they do feel that Bayside and Oakland Gardens are  
9 sort of considered one. And most people, when I  
10 ask them where they live, they say "Bayside."

11 And then, when I really ask them where their  
12 address is, they are like, "Oh, yeah, that's in  
13 Oakland Gardens." But, you know, I mean, I think  
14 it's easier because people recognize Bayside as  
15 opposed to -- because it's more of a known city.

16 And so, I think most of the folks that live  
17 in that area identify with being more in the  
18 Bayside neighborhood. So, we are asking to keep  
19 that together in the City Council District 19 as  
20 opposed to putting it in 23, as it currently is  
21 right now.

22 And the thing, we just ask that, you know,  
23 appreciate that you are listening to our  
24 testimony and strongly urge that you consider  
25 what the community members are saying and really

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1 take into consideration what we consider as  
2 communities of interest and neighborhood  
3 boundaries. So, thank you so much (applause).

4 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

5 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Ken  
6 Cohen, to be followed by Ali Najmi.

7 MR. COHEN: Good evening. My name is  
8 Kenneth D. Cohen, regional director of the NAACP,  
9 New York State Conference Metropolitan Council.  
10 I bring you greetings from our New York State  
11 Conference President, Dr. Hazel N. Dukes.

12 As most of you should know, the NAACP was  
13 founded right here in New York City in 1909.  
14 Since that time, the NAACP has shown a great  
15 interest in the election process and the  
16 representation of the people in this great  
17 nation, especially in this great City of New  
18 York.

19 Not only has the NAACP fought against  
20 segregation and prejudice, not only has the NAACP  
21 opened the doors for good health services,  
22 quality housing, employment, fair and equal  
23 education, but the NAACP has fought so hard for  
24 the many people in this room so that they could  
25 vote and participate in this process, as the

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1 NAACP continues to struggle for voters rights  
2 against all odds and tricks.

3 The NAACP understands the long battle which  
4 costs lives of many great leaders to get to  
5 today's hearing. Although this is the third  
6 hearing of five that will conclude at the end of  
7 this week, the next phase in this process will  
8 start shortly.

9 Our members have been present, observing and  
10 monitoring these hearings so that we can make an  
11 analysis of these proceedings to make a  
12 presentation that will present the diversity of  
13 this city and not forget the long, hard battle  
14 for representation of the diversity of New York  
15 City on the New York City Council.

16 We must know the past to move into the  
17 future. And the New York City Council, in their  
18 first 100 years, did not reflect the entire City  
19 of New York, until the first African American,  
20 Adam Clayton Powell, was elected in 1941.

21 Then a slow progression of great  
22 African-American council members until the first  
23 Latina, Nydia Velazquez was elected in 1984. It  
24 was not until 1989 when we saw the number of  
25 council members increase to its current number,

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1 55, that we saw a drastic change in its diverse  
2 representation.

3 Although today, New York City Council has a  
4 diversity with the election of first Asian City  
5 Council member, John Liu, with Margaret Chin and  
6 Peter Koo becoming elected council members later,  
7 the NAACP will remain diligent in the efforts for  
8 equal representation as the NAACP has in its 100  
9 years as a watchdog that opened the doors for  
10 all.

11 At the beginning of 2012, the process for  
12 district lines started with the selection and  
13 appointment of this body of individuals  
14 representing this great city, charged with fairly  
15 reviewing current New York City lines, holding  
16 hearings and making positively sure that the  
17 people of New York City can be represented  
18 fairly. Thank you. (Applause.)

19 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Cohen.

20 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Ali  
21 Najmi, to be followed by Frank Toner.

22 MR. NAJMI: Thank you. My name is Ali  
23 Najmi. I am here representing SEVA. It is a  
24 community-based organization located in Richmond  
25 Hill.

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1 MR. ROMANO: Keep your voice up.

2 MR. NAJMI: Sure. Maybe it's easier if I  
3 take it out. Thank you. My name is Ali Najmi.  
4 I represent SEVA. We are a community-based  
5 organization from Richmond Hill. We are very  
6 involved in community organizing to increase  
7 civic engagement in the communities that we  
8 organize in.

9 And I am here to talk about the need for  
10 this Commission to unite the Richmond Hill and  
11 South Ozone Park community. I want to echo all  
12 the statements made by my colleagues who spoke  
13 before, and I don't want to belabor the same  
14 points that they made.

15 Instead, I would like to really take the  
16 opportunity to really highlight, I think, what it  
17 is we are all feeling in this room. And I think  
18 what we are really trying to understand here as  
19 advocates, as community members, is the sincerity  
20 of this Commission towards the goal of empowering  
21 and uniting communities.

22 And I think this commission's greatest  
23 challenge in this process will be to prove us  
24 wrong, that in fact, you do care about the  
25 communities in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park,

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1 that you believe that the last process led to a  
2 blunder. How is it that four council districts  
3 represent an area that could be an ideal council  
4 district with Woodhaven to the west, Jamaica  
5 Avenue to the north, Van Wyck to the east,  
6 Conduit to the south, all natural boundaries.

7 Within this district and within those  
8 boundaries, you have a legitimate community of  
9 interest, with a number that reaches close to the  
10 160,000 person threshold that is required of us  
11 in this process. So, how is it that this can be  
12 corrected? I think that the answers that we and  
13 the questions that we all have really are not  
14 going to be resolved until we see the draft map.

15 I think this Commission's legitimacy will  
16 hang on what they do with Richmond Hill and South  
17 Ozone Park. If those maps do not unite us, this  
18 Commission will unfortunately have proven us  
19 that, perhaps, this is not really a community.  
20 Thank you. (Applause.)

21 MS. BRAGG: I'm sorry, can you say your  
22 natural boundaries again?

23 MR. NAJMI: Sure, Woodhaven Boulevard to the  
24 west, Jamaica Avenue to the north, Van Wyck to  
25 the east, Conduit to the south.

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1 MS. BRAGG: Thank you (applause).

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Frank  
3 Toner, to be followed by William Stanford, Jr.

4 MR. TONER: Dear Commission Members, my name  
5 is Frank Toner. I am the president of the Rocky  
6 Hill Civic Association which represents an area  
7 of eastern Queens known as Bellerose Manor.

8 MR. ROMANO: Mr. Toner, would you just speak  
9 into the mic.

10 MR. TONER: Sure. Our association is also a  
11 member of a coalition of organizations known as  
12 Eastern Queens United. We formed this  
13 association last year in part to advocate for  
14 sensible drawing of electoral lines that would  
15 keep communities together.

16 Our communities are similar in makeup. We  
17 are all very nicely diversified. We have the  
18 same police district and community board. We are  
19 composed mostly of one- and two-family homes and  
20 cooperatives. We have similar goals on area  
21 development and community issues.

22 The entirety of my association and the  
23 associations that are members of Eastern Queens  
24 United are located in the 23rd District. My  
25 request is simple. Please keep us all in the

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1 same district. Do not break up our areas.

2 I understand that the new districts may be  
3 bigger than our present district. If it does  
4 need to be expanded, I ask that you try to add  
5 one community as best you can without breaking up  
6 that community. I believe that all efforts  
7 should be made to keep our communities together.  
8 It is in communities that our democracy begins,  
9 and they should be respected.

10 That is the testimony that I have. I just  
11 want to make a comment in light of some of the  
12 other testimony tonight. Oakland Gardens is in  
13 District 23 and I have said that I wanted to keep  
14 everything the same. Obviously, as people in  
15 Oakland Gardens, they are not part of Eastern  
16 Queens United want to move within another  
17 district, I think that should be honored also.

18 It's just that, if you are adding other  
19 areas, you should add a complete community as  
20 best you can, thank you (applause).

21 MS. BRAGG: Sir, excuse me, you said there  
22 were community boards that had police precincts  
23 that were the same. What is that community  
24 board?

25 MR. TONER: Community Board 13Q and the

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1 105th Precinct.

2 MS. BRAGG: Thank you.

3 MR. TONER: Thank you (applause).

4 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is William  
5 Stanford, Jr. to be followed by Aneesah Shah.

6 MR. STANFORD: Just a heads-up. If you hold  
7 public hearings here at the Flushing Library, you  
8 need a bigger room obviously, okay, especially if  
9 you intend to rip the Queens neighborhoods.

10 That's what it appears you intend to do,  
11 which means you intend to imitate LATFOR, which  
12 as I specifically told you, as I specifically  
13 said, don't make the same mistake they made. But  
14 it appears you intend to do it anyway, okay.

15 Also, if you hold it here, and you start at  
16 5:00, let us enter the room between 4:00 and  
17 4:30, not at 5:00, the same time you are  
18 starting, which is also the same time people are  
19 signing out. If you don't know, some people are  
20 still working 9:00 to 5:00. But apparently, you  
21 forgot that (laughter).

22 And as I said before, the public hearing  
23 should run between 7:00 and 9:00, not between  
24 5:00 and 9:00, okay? This one started ten  
25 minutes late. Yesterday, you were in Staten

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1 Island; you were 15 minutes late. And I believe  
2 you were late in Brooklyn last Friday.

3 Some of you members here were late in  
4 Brooklyn last Monday. You were late in Staten  
5 Island yesterday. And yesterday, you put us in a  
6 small room packed like sardines. Today you put  
7 us in a small room packed like sardines, which is  
8 completely senseless, okay?

9 Nothing as senseless -- the employees, some  
10 employees blocked the doors before we entered  
11 this room. (Applause.) My question is, between  
12 you and the Queens Library, who the hell is  
13 running this public hearing, you or them?  
14 (Laughter.)

15 If you are running this public hearing, why  
16 are they blocking the doors? Why don't you block  
17 the doors yourself? That's how I feel about it.  
18 You should direct your traffic yourself  
19 (laughter). You don't need them. I don't need  
20 them. We don't need them.

21 And as far as these districts go, you can do  
22 better. You got this zigzag, as I said  
23 yesterday, this zigzag. Go straight across, go  
24 by the bus corridors because we got newest bus  
25 routes in Queens. It's the biggest borough.

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1 Just go by the bus corridors.

2 Yes, I know some people will be  
3 inconvenienced. I am not a Queens resident, but  
4 either way, most of these people are. Yeah,  
5 somebody will be inconvenienced. Some of them  
6 will get the ultimate satisfaction, or as Trish  
7 mentioned, the ultimate "stratisfaction." That's  
8 another story. I prefer -- I like satisfaction,  
9 not "stratisfaction." Like, that's another  
10 story.

11 But you can do better with these lines.  
12 Like I said, the zigzagging, what was with the  
13 significant zag? It's like you know those zigzag  
14 scissors that were used years back to cut  
15 clothes? That's what I am seeing (laughter).

16 Is that what you intend to use, those little  
17 zigzag scissors to cut the districts? Use  
18 regular scissors, use a knife, switchblade, razor  
19 blade, machete to cut it better -- (timer dings).  
20 Yes, go by the bus corridors. As I said before,  
21 go by the bus corridors because people will, you  
22 know, understand districts a little better.

23 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

24 MR. STANFORD: And also, go straight across.  
25 Go, up/down, go straight across, not zigzag, like

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1 you running like a fugitive.

2 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

3 MR. STANFORD: Okay? (Applause.)

4 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
5 Aneesah Shah, to be followed by Garth Marchant.

6 MS. SHAH: Good afternoon, Commission  
7 Members and concerned residents of Queens. My  
8 name is Aneesah Shah. I am 16 years old and I  
9 live with my parents and my older sister in South  
10 Ozone Park. In the fall, I will also be a senior  
11 at Richmond Hill High School where I am an honors  
12 student.

13 I am involved in several extracurricular  
14 programs at my school and in my community. At  
15 school I am vice president of the prestigious key  
16 club, international chapter. I am also a youth  
17 leader with the Indo-Caribbean Alliance, a local,  
18 nonprofit organization.

19 I have always thought of my immediate  
20 neighborhoods where I live where I go to school,  
21 where I go grocery shopping with my family or  
22 where go we go pray together. What I did not  
23 know, nearly each of these things was in a  
24 separate City Council district. This has  
25 certainly led to some of the poorest local

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1 governance we see anywhere in New York City.

2 When older people in the neighborhood find  
3 out about this, they quickly compare it to some  
4 of the political situations they faced back in  
5 Guyana. They said this was a big part of the  
6 reason they leave Guyana and come here in the  
7 first place.

8 I don't think they are right, but I am  
9 having a hard time proving them wrong. For  
10 example, while I am an honors student, less than  
11 50 percent of the students at Richmond High  
12 School actually graduate. They are very  
13 different from me. Most of the students at the  
14 school are from Guyana or South Asia.

15 They live in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park or  
16 South Ozone Park. This is the case for John  
17 Adams High School as well as some of the junior  
18 high schools in this area. In this entire area  
19 of 1,000 residents, there is a single community  
20 center.

21 Although I have some friends who go to the  
22 South Queens Boys and Girls Club, most families  
23 and students from immigrant countries have never  
24 heard of it. Even if they did, it would not  
25 accommodate all of us.

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1           While we have lots of places to worship,  
2           food stores and dozens of family members go by,  
3           we have nowhere to go for assistance for  
4           homework, we have nowhere to go after school or  
5           on weekends and we usually have to leave the  
6           neighborhood to find anything useful to do with  
7           our time.

8           You can help us with this. The parents of  
9           my school should not have to go to two or more  
10          council members to deal with issues at the  
11          school. For example, when both of our major high  
12          schools -- that's John Adams and Richmond Hill --  
13          were repropoed for closure, we need a district  
14          where the elected official will be from this  
15          neighborhood and will work with the community to  
16          build a space for students to go after school.

17          We need people in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park  
18          and South Ozone Park to believe they came to New  
19          York City where there is a fair government. I  
20          strongly urge you to keep these neighborhoods  
21          together in a single district. Thank you.

22                 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

23                 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Garth  
24          Marchant, followed by Kris Gounden.

25                 MR. MARCHANT: My name is Garth Marchant. I

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1 am the City Councilman in the special election  
2 from the Bronx (applause). I am the lead  
3 candidate and I will be elected as a City  
4 Councilman in November.

5 However, my office is in Queens and I ran  
6 before when I used to live in Queens. And I am  
7 telling you, there was a disaster from the last  
8 reapportionment. The intention was good, by then  
9 Chairman Dr. John Flacco, who said he was going  
10 to create in the 28th Councilmanic District  
11 basically Caribbean, Indo-Caribbean district.

12 But what they did was, they created  
13 unnatural boundaries by placing most of the  
14 district in a big development called Rochedale  
15 Village and the South Jamaica Houses. Now, we  
16 had qualified people of Indo-Caribbean descent  
17 and they couldn't even get one vote. The person  
18 who always won the district was -- got all the  
19 the votes in Washington Village and it  
20 overwhelmed the rest of the district.

21 And I am saying to you, look at these  
22 districts. When you look at the  
23 reapportionments, you cannot include Rochedale  
24 Village all the way into Richmond Hill anymore,  
25 because no one of Indo-Caribbean descent would

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1 ever get elected with that kind of -- and so, if  
2 you are going to do these districts, you got to  
3 move -- you can't put the 28th in Richmond Hill  
4 at all, okay?

5 Because it kicks African Americans against  
6 Indo-Caribbean community, and that creates racial  
7 tension. And believe me, the services don't get  
8 to Richmond Hill or South Ozone Park because  
9 representation is not there.

10 So, you've got to take a look. If you look  
11 at the Census, you will see the population  
12 increase, okay? You will see population  
13 increase, population from Jamaica, population  
14 from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, India,  
15 Bangladesh, I believe increase in population.  
16 And in that district, we are talking about that  
17 is the population.

18 So, even if you have Indo-Caribbean, you  
19 also have other Caribbean nations that are there  
20 that have common identity and common culture. So  
21 therefore, that is the connection. We can't be  
22 over there with an African-American community  
23 that is fighting between that and then we don't  
24 get into services.

25 So, when you redraw the lines, go back to

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1 the drawing table. Don't put that Rochedale  
2 Village in the 28th Councilmanic District. Keep  
3 the district whole like we said and let's support  
4 it that way (applause) (timer dings). I will be  
5 on the City Council with you on that map when you  
6 get it, so I am going to be fighting for that  
7 effort. Let's keep it whole and let's not divide  
8 the community. Let's keep it as one (applause).

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Kris  
10 Gounden, to be followed by Michael O'Keefe.

11 MR. GOUNDEN: Good evening, ladies and  
12 gentlemen. I would like to thank the community  
13 for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My  
14 testimony is basically when it does not work,  
15 when the redistricting does not work.

16 Ozone Park, Richmond Hill is a community  
17 that my family has been in since 1976. We have  
18 become victims of redistricting that did not  
19 work. The Caribbean, West Indian community has  
20 grown throughout Ozone Park through our will to  
21 live together. Because of the shape of the  
22 district, we cannot vote to elect someone who is  
23 born of us. We cannot elect someone who is  
24 likely to speak of our interests.

25 We cannot vote for someone who -- we can

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1 raise our children together, but we cannot vote  
2 together for one of us born of us who will all  
3 raise his children. Instead, in the schools they  
4 do not talk to our children about how we came to  
5 America many years ago. The schools in our  
6 community act like we have no history and no  
7 voice in the City Council to demand that our past  
8 be included in the curriculum so that we can have  
9 pride and self-respect. It is not just other  
10 people's history that makes them feel good about  
11 themselves. We deserve to feel good about  
12 ourselves, too.

13 Right now, part of my property has been  
14 taken without compensation.

15 Former City Councilman of Howard Beach,  
16 Joseph Addabbo, handled the land grab. There was  
17 no easement on my property on any official map as  
18 required by law. There have been no hearing on  
19 the takings of my property required by law.  
20 There was no notice of taking of my property by  
21 law, as required by law. Eminent Domain Law  
22 Section 208 was never complied with. And these  
23 politician and the judges act like the law does  
24 not have to be applied when it comes to the  
25 Caribbean community.

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1           NYPD do not respect our private property,  
2           our civil rights, our rights as Americans. I  
3           took my case to court. Michael (unintelligible),  
4           a City employee, got up to the witness stand and  
5           admitted to the Court, admitted to the City,  
6           admitted to all of you that he had no knowledge  
7           of the facts of affidavit that he signed.

8           This is perjury. Federal Judge Brian Cogan  
9           did absolutely nothing about the perjury. The  
10          City did nothing about the perjury. The now  
11          State Senator Joe Addabbo did not hear about  
12          that. The current City Councilman Eric Ulrich  
13          did nothing about the land grab on my property.

14          This is what has been done to the American  
15          Indians. Now been it's being to the West  
16          Indians. If we do not do something about  
17          representation that we can trust, it is going to  
18          keep happening.

19          We need districting that allows us a voice  
20          in the machine, where our voices can speak on the  
21          conspiracy between the judges and those outside  
22          our community, our voices in the redistricting of  
23          the lines, our vices ourselves, our voice must be  
24          heard like Councilman Charles Barron's voice is  
25          heard in his community.

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1           As a matter of fact, Councilman Barron came  
2 out of his district to my home to put a stop to  
3 the white supremacy that is running rampant. We  
4 need to select our councilmen who represent us --  
5 (timer dings) -- when our homes are under attack,  
6 when we are harassed.

7           MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

8           MR. GOUNDEN: My testimony, the full pages  
9 are in here, if there is any councilman that  
10 would like to assist in my legal -- my case is  
11 going to the U.S. Supreme Court because the  
12 Second Circuit Court of Appeals denied me.

13           That's opened the doors to the U.S. Supreme  
14 Court. Right now, we have an inquest next week  
15 Tuesday on this where the judges can hear my side  
16 of the story.

17           MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

18           MR. GOUNDEN: This is when redistricting  
19 doesn't work. No politician will talk to me  
20 (laughter).

21           MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
22 Michael O'Keefe, to be followed by Darrel  
23 Sukhdeo.

24           MR. O'Keefe: My name is Michael O'Keefe. I  
25 am the president of the Korean War Civic

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1 Association in Bellerose. And on behalf of my  
2 association, I would like to thank you for your  
3 work to make this process as transparent, common  
4 sense and in the interest of good government as  
5 possible. And we are in the 23rd City Council  
6 District and I came here basically to ask to keep  
7 the 23rd intact, basically as it is.

8 Like my colleague and friend Tom, I would  
9 amend that by saying that if the people of  
10 Oakland Gardens determine that that was in their  
11 best interest, that would not be something I  
12 would object to. As it is, the district is  
13 pretty much compact and contiguous, just as the  
14 guidelines would recommend.

15 And we have many similarities and common  
16 interests in terms of similar housing, stocks  
17 shared, police precincts, community boards. We  
18 have many civic and community organizations who  
19 are part of this board called Eastern Queens  
20 United. We represent people of various ethnic  
21 and religious backgrounds in Bellerose, Queens  
22 Village, Floral Parks, Glen Oaks and New Hyde  
23 Park.

24 We worked together on a number of issues,  
25 civic and otherwise, and I think pretty well

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1 people of all different ethnic groups work  
2 together very well, and we would like to stay  
3 together as we have been found that has been very  
4 successful in the past.

5 Once again, just to echo Frank, if you did  
6 have to make adjustments by adding people to our  
7 areas, to our community, you could try to do it  
8 in such a way that you add complete communities  
9 such as intact civic groups and that kind of  
10 thing. And I thank you for your work.

11 (Applause.)

12 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

13 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
14 Darrel Sukhdeo, to be followed by Glenn  
15 Magpantay.

16 MR. SUKHDEO: Good afternoon to you all. I  
17 am Guyanese. I am Trinidadian. I am  
18 Indo-Caribbean. I am South Asian. I am Asian  
19 American. That's how I identify. My name, by  
20 the way, is Darrel Sukhdeo. I live in Richmond  
21 Hill and I have been there for more than 15  
22 years. I have been a volunteer in the community  
23 for more than 12 years.

24 I represent several local organizations, as  
25 well as the community at large. Some of these

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1 organizations include the Rajkumari Center for  
2 Indo-Caribbean Culture, the Indo-Caribbean  
3 Alliance, from whom you have heard today, the  
4 Richmond Hill Economic Development Corporation  
5 from whom you are going to hear, as well as many  
6 other organizations outside of this community,  
7 including Union South-East Asia Region, which  
8 represents community members from within Richmond  
9 Hill/South Ozone Park, or hear again later from  
10 (unintelligible) who also represent members of  
11 our community.

12 So, I am here today to advocate, like  
13 everyone else, for one district for people of  
14 common interest in South Queens, Richmond Hill  
15 and South Ozone Park. We have also reached these  
16 organizations reached more than 60,000 people.  
17 We have served more than 13,000 people, by a  
18 conservative estimate, within these district  
19 lines that are advocated by all of them.

20 I have here in my hand a graphic map which I  
21 will include in my testimony that you guys can  
22 look at, so it is very clear and concise what you  
23 are talking about. As many have said, we have  
24 been disenfranchised, and I echo the comments and  
25 reasons that were given before, all right?

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1           But I want to be very clear about one thing.  
2           President Bill Clinton said, and I quote, "The  
3           most important family policy, urban policy, labor  
4           policy, minority policy and foreign policy in  
5           America is to have and to ensure representation  
6           by all peoples."

7           Surely, we are all part of the American  
8           public. When I say "we," I am talking about  
9           Asian Americans, South Asian Americans,  
10          Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Caribbean peoples, all  
11          of whom represent part of the South Asian,  
12          Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park district.

13          We are simply asking for the opportunity for  
14          representation. Should you draw these lines as  
15          we are asking, we will have the opportunity to  
16          fight for our representation. We ask you to  
17          approve the AALDEF district map because the  
18          currently existing lines does not keep us  
19          together.

20          As immigrants with first- and  
21          second-generation children, we need new  
22          representation because of the existing  
23          politicians do not have those communities (timer  
24          dings). Among the top ten immigrant communities  
25          in New York City, you will find Guyanese and

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1 Trinidadians. Both have common interests in  
2 South Queens, Richmond Hills, Ozone Park.

3 So, we strongly advocate and I am personally  
4 asking you as a community activist for more than  
5 12 years to adopt the lines advocated by AACCRD  
6 and AALDEF. Thank you.

7 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

8 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Glenn  
9 Magpantay, to be followed by Kanupriya Pandey.

10 MR. MAGPANTAY: I brought a map. It's  
11 always difficult, I think challenging, to do  
12 redistricting without a map. What is being  
13 circulated now, Commissioners, is the copy of my  
14 testimony. I will leave the details there. You  
15 will also see the last three pages is actually a  
16 map.

17 This is not the map that everyone has been  
18 referencing to. I will talk a little bit more  
19 about the tremendous growth of the Asian-American  
20 community in Queens. My name is Glenn Magpantay.  
21 I am the director of the Democracy Program at the  
22 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

23 We worked with the Commission the last round  
24 to draw those districts. Senator Padavan, it's  
25 good to see you again. And I have been counsel

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1 in a number of voting rights lawsuits and  
2 litigation matters, as well as represent the  
3 Asian-American voters in Section 5 pre-clearance  
4 challenges at the United States Department of  
5 Justice. So, we are well familiar with the  
6 redistricting process in New York and it's  
7 application for the City Council process.

8 Mr. Chairman, you were absolutely correct in  
9 your opening remarks that redistricting does not  
10 occur in a political vacuum, that there is a body  
11 of law which the Commission must follow. And you  
12 have heard tonight from so many Asian Americans  
13 and community leaders about the need to adhere to  
14 the City Charter and its mandate to preserve  
15 communities of interest, to keep district lines  
16 compact and contiguous, and the holdings of the  
17 Federal Voting Rights Act in its prohibition  
18 against minority disenfranchisement and  
19 gerrymandering, and also to prevent against the  
20 retrogression of minority voting strength.

21 In Queens, the Asian-American population has  
22 grown 300 times faster than the overall growth  
23 rate of the borough. There are nearly half a  
24 million Asian Americans in the Borough of Queens.  
25 20 percent of the population are Asian American,

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1 one in five.

2 Yet Queens still finds one of the lowest  
3 representation of Asian Americans in the City  
4 Council, notwithstanding the tremendous growth  
5 our population has endured. The comment that I  
6 made tonight from the many community leaders and  
7 the map that I am illustrating here demonstrates  
8 -- is various.

9 For those of you who are not from Queens,  
10 and you don't know the geography, we thought it  
11 would be helpful to have a map. As you see in  
12 this population concentration, the red are  
13 Asian-American population clusters in Flushing --  
14 the Asian-American population in Flushing in  
15 Bayside, in Western Queens where you see Glen  
16 Oaks, Bellerose, Floral Park, Jackson Heights and  
17 Elmhurst, which has a large and growing  
18 Asian-American community, we tried drawing a  
19 district that would give Asian Americans and  
20 Latinos fair representation in the communities of  
21 Corona, Jackson Heights and Elmhurst ten years  
22 ago.

23 We were not able to do that. The numbers  
24 have shown that, because of the tremendous  
25 increase in the population of both Asian

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1 Americans and the density of Latinos,  
2 particularly in the Corona areas, we do believe  
3 that you can accommodate both communities. Oh,  
4 there goes my time.

5 So, we have a number of communities this you  
6 need to represent. The Voting Rights Act, just  
7 really quickly -- (timer dings) -- the Federal  
8 Voting Rights Act does require that districts  
9 preserve minority representation through exit  
10 polling and political cohesion.

11 We have found that Asian Americans are  
12 politically cohesive as required by the Voting  
13 Rights Act, and that voting is racially  
14 polarized. We will be submitting a unity map  
15 which gives representation to Asian Americans,  
16 Latinos and African Americans and meets with the  
17 representations of the City Charter. This is not  
18 it. It is coming. Thanks (applause).

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is  
20 Kanupriya Pandey, to be followed by Vishnu  
21 Mahadeo.

22 MS. PANDEY: My name is Kanupriya Pandey and  
23 I am a member of MinKwon Center's Youth  
24 Empowerment Program. I have lived in Flushing  
25 for 16 years on the intersection of Kissena

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1 Boulevard and Cherry Avenue. I currently attend  
2 Francis Lewis High School, and before that, I  
3 have attended PS 24Q of the East/West School of  
4 International Studies.

5 Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a  
6 workshop on redistricting in Queens. The  
7 workshop provided me with information about how  
8 district lines are mapped in Queens. Through  
9 this workshop, I was also informed about how,  
10 sometimes, district lines are manipulated to  
11 serve political interests and incumbents through  
12 the practice of something called gerrymandering,  
13 a principle that I believe works to discourage  
14 political participation in my community, and so  
15 runs against the very reason that we gather here  
16 today.

17 Instead, I believe that districts should be  
18 drawn to protect neighborhoods and communities of  
19 interest. Living in Flushing for most of my  
20 life, I believe that Flushing constitutes a  
21 community of interest. I basically agree with  
22 the boundaries that the Asian American Legal  
23 Defense and Education Fund have in their  
24 communities of interest survey.

25 As it includes most of the places I work in,

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1 volunteer in, live in and hang out, my high  
2 school is on the edge of Flushing. And beyond  
3 that, the neighborhood is definitely different.

4 Looking at my surrounding neighborhoods and  
5 friends, I have noticed that Flushing is home to  
6 a very diverse set of people, many Chinese,  
7 Korean and South-Asian Americans, many of them  
8 who do not speak English as their first language.

9 I have also observed that people that live  
10 here live in apartments that they rent. I think  
11 many people in Flushing don't have cars because  
12 many people in Flushing use buses for  
13 transportation. For example, I take the Q17 to  
14 school and I can mostly walk or take the bus to  
15 go to most of the places I need.

16 I hope that when you are drawing City  
17 Council lines, you keep the interest of the  
18 people in mind. Districts should be made so that  
19 they do not divide communities like Flushing.  
20 It's important to keep Flushing together as the  
21 area has so much in common, including aspects of  
22 transportation, culture and language that I have  
23 already mentioned.

24 Throughout my time in Flushing, I have even  
25 the community grow and flourish. Organizations

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1 such as the MinKwon Center work hard to increase  
2 voter turnout, and this cannot be made possible  
3 without district lines drawn fairly and properly.  
4 Thank you. (Applause.)

5 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Vishnu  
7 Mahadeo, to be followed by John Park.

8 MR. MAHADEO: I am Vishnu Mahadeo. I am the  
9 executive director and president of the Richmond  
10 Hill Economic Development Council. For the  
11 record, I would like to give my written testimony  
12 to the panel. I have enough copies and I have a  
13 couple of extra maps for their benefit.

14 As that is being circulated, I would just  
15 like to give a summary of what has happened  
16 because of the poor redistricting that has taken  
17 place in the Richmond Hill/Ozone Park area. As  
18 you heard from students from the schools, we have  
19 two of the worse high schools in Queens. We have  
20 50 percent -- 51 percent failing to graduate, yet  
21 we don't have a City Council we can go to to get  
22 results.

23 Imagine, we are after the de facto  
24 organization that is running a business entity  
25 along Liberty Avenue, which is the aorta of

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1 Richmond Hill. On that community, we are bounded  
2 from Van Wyck Expressway to Woodhaven boulevard.  
3 Yet, imagine you have 900 businesses in that  
4 community, and the City had the audacity to want  
5 to close the southbound exit of Liberty Avenue  
6 exit.

7 Now, we did not have any political person to  
8 represent us. That was inimical to the business  
9 community in this now climate. We had to  
10 challenge it as an organization because we have  
11 no political representation to the City Hall to  
12 say we cannot allow this, and do you have a  
13 budget for the demise of this community? Of  
14 course, the answer was "no" and they can not go  
15 and stop that. They did not -- what you call --  
16 block the exit.

17 Now, in addition to that, imagine the  
18 Americans Disability Act of 1990. Everyone in  
19 the United States benefited from that. The  
20 United States, everyone had ten years to get  
21 themselves together. Yet, the MTA disregarded  
22 Richmond Hill.

23 We had to wait for 22 years before anyone  
24 wanted to consider giving us an elevator. When  
25 we challenge the MTA for a legal position, then

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1 they respond to us, "Yes, we will get you an  
2 elevator."

3 This is because we do not have any political  
4 representation. We, small organizations as we  
5 are, have to band together, use whatever muscles  
6 we can so we can get representation.

7 We are asking this body, a body that is  
8 empowered, that has the authority to correct  
9 these injustices. Look at this map. Can you get  
10 something more intact than this? This is square.  
11 (Laughter.) You can't better this? This was  
12 drawn intentionally using natural boundaries.  
13 Our population is well within a City Council  
14 district.

15 We will applaud you. We will recommend you  
16 because we think that's the right thing you are  
17 doing. We will ask of you, please, take a  
18 look at the maps (timer dings). We are hoping  
19 that this august panel will do what is right.  
20 Thank you.

21 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

22 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is John  
23 Park, to be followed by Rasel Rahman and Zarin  
24 Ahmed.

25 MR. PARK: Good afternoon, Members of the

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1 Commission. I am here representing the YWCA of  
2 Queens. We have become here in the community  
3 since 1978. We served thousands every year. And  
4 I just want to also mention that a lot of these  
5 organizations here are representing hundreds of  
6 thousands of constituents. And we have our ear  
7 to the ground. We are talking to members all the  
8 time.

9 And so, no one knows the community better  
10 than the people do here. So, I really want you  
11 guys -- I encourage you guys to talk the  
12 testimony seriously.

13 For Queens, for the district lines, there is  
14 only a few recommendations I want to make. One  
15 is, Richmond Hill and Ozone Park are largely  
16 considered the same community. And they  
17 currently split into four different districts.  
18 So, they should be held together.

19 Oakland Gardens, near the top of District  
20 23, should be included in District 19. And I  
21 think a lot of the people here basically have a  
22 consensus on what the lines should be. And I  
23 want to echo what Ali said earlier. This is a  
24 really test of accountability because everyone  
25 here is basically saying the same thing.

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1           For the Flushing community, the YWCA is also  
2           right in the middle of Flushing. And for the  
3           most part, the lines are good. The current  
4           boundaries, as Steven Choi had mentioned, are  
5           natural boundaries. And according to the 2010  
6           Census, the Asian-American population in Queens  
7           grew exponentially faster than any other group,  
8           which is also true for New York City and all of  
9           New York State.

10           The communities also share similar needs as  
11           immigrants, including things like culturally  
12           sensitive language-appropriate needs, everything  
13           from responding to domestic violence, needing  
14           accurate information, communicating health care  
15           needs, to broader civic engagement with voting  
16           participation to bullying in schools.

17           Back in 1996, when the City Council Member  
18           Julia Harrison, representing District 20, which  
19           includes this library, and is currently  
20           represented by Peter Koo, she remarked that Asian  
21           immigrants in this district was an invasion, not  
22           an assimilation. And both sides of that little  
23           phrase is offensive.

24           We must be cognizant of the  
25           misrepresentations and the tensions that still

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1 exist, that we are in a post 9/11 world, and the  
2 issues of how we treat immigrants still divide  
3 parts of this nation and this city. And the  
4 community members in Flushing deserve to maintain  
5 an undiluted voice, to elect someone who doesn't  
6 see them as people who are invading or needing to  
7 assimilate, but as constituents who can be the  
8 diverse people that they are and who made  
9 Flushing the very unique place in the world that  
10 it is.

11 So, I hope you seriously take these  
12 testimonies into consideration, and also the  
13 statements of the other members of the Asian  
14 American Community Coalition -- (timer dings) --  
15 on Redistricting and Democracy, AACCRD, and also  
16 the forthcoming recommended maps by AALDEF.  
17 Thank you.

18 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Park (applause).

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speakers will be  
20 Rasel Rahman and Zarin Ahmed, to be followed by  
21 Michael Mallon.

22 MS. AHMED: Good evening. I would like to  
23 thank the Commission for holding these hearings,  
24 first of all. My name is Zarin Ahmed.

25 MR. RAHMAN: And my name is Rasel Rahman

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1 (unintelligible).

2 MS. AHMED: We work with Chhaya CDC, a  
3 community-based organization based in Jackson  
4 Heights. We work primarily with the South-Asian  
5 population in Queens on issues focused around  
6 civic engagement and community development.

7 We are speaking today because South Asians  
8 who are immigrants, Bangladeshi, Indian, Sri  
9 Lankan, Nepali, Tibetan and Indo-Caribbean  
10 descent are among the fastest growing populations  
11 in New York City.

12 In the last decade, our population has  
13 increased by 159 percent. However, to date, the  
14 South Asian community has had no representation  
15 on the City, State and Congressional levels of  
16 New York City, despite our growing presence and  
17 influence.

18 Earlier this year, Chhaya CDC released a  
19 needs-assessment report which we will be  
20 attaching with our written testimony. We found  
21 that, in addition to our common cultural  
22 backgrounds, this section of the community is  
23 also facing serious housing crises. Renters have  
24 faced harassment and live in deplorable housing,  
25 which has led to 65 percent of our renters living

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1 in overcrowded conditions.

2 On the other side, homeowners are still not  
3 past the foreclosure crises. As victims of  
4 predatory lenders, they are now the targets of  
5 rescue-scam lenders. These communities will need  
6 strong and unified representation to address the  
7 housing shortages and financial problems that  
8 they face. So, we urge the task force to take a  
9 closer look at neighborhoods and ensure that  
10 South Asian and Asian immigrant communities are  
11 kept together and not splintered among newly  
12 drawn districts. We support AALDEF's  
13 Asian-American neighborhood boundaries and  
14 communities-of-interest survey, which delivers  
15 shared concerns and issues among immigrants'  
16 communities.

17 There are four neighborhoods with high  
18 concentrations of South Asians that we urge the  
19 task force to keep together in their  
20 redistricting in Queens: One, the Bellerose,  
21 Floral Park, Queens Village and Glen Oaks; two,  
22 the Briarwood and Jamaica Hills, Richmond Hill  
23 and South Ozone Park, and four, the Jackson  
24 Heights and Elmhurst.

25 As we mentioned before, the Bangladeshi

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1 community is one of the fastest growing within  
2 South Asian community. I am one of them. I am  
3 Bangladeshi American. I live in City District 24  
4 and I have one of the big Bangladeshi groups of  
5 neighborhoods.

6 And as we grow fast, our needs and issues  
7 are increasing day by day. And I see all people  
8 are studying that are don't know really what they  
9 should go for any issues or concerns. So, I  
10 would like -- this is our -- my strong urging to  
11 you, to keep us together so we can address our  
12 issues, our needs -- (timer dings)  
13 (unintelligible). Thank you.

14 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Rahman. Thank  
15 you, Ms. Ahmed.

16 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
17 Michael Mallon, to be followed by Rose Eng.

18 MR. MALLON: Hello. Good evening to the  
19 Districting Commission and to company. My name  
20 is Michael Mallon. I am the president of the  
21 Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club of Queens.  
22 Founded in 1994, LGDCQ is the only LGBT, or  
23 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender,  
24 independent democratic club in the Borough of  
25 Queens.

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1           LGDCQ was founded to increase the visibility  
2           of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender  
3           communities in the political areas of Queens, New  
4           York City, New York State and the nation. I  
5           would like to address redistricting as it affects  
6           the LGBT community in Queens County.

7           Queens, specifically Western Queens, has  
8           been home to a large and ethnically diverse LGBT  
9           population for several decades. While people who  
10          identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and  
11          transgender may be found throughout the entire  
12          borough, the neighborhoods that comprise might of  
13          Western Queens, Astoria, Jackson Heights, Long  
14          Island City and Sunnyside have gained the  
15          reputation of being both gay and gay-friendly  
16          neighborhoods due to their large and visible LGBT  
17          communities.

18          Of these communities, Jackson Heights has  
19          the distinction of being home to the greatest  
20          concentration of LGBT individuals, many of whom  
21          identify as Latino and are recent immigrants.  
22          The prominence of the neighborhood's LGBT  
23          population is made manifest in many ways. A  
24          number of not-for-profit organizations that make  
25          their home in Jackson Heights are headquartered

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1 there to serve the LGBT community.

2 Some notable examples include the Jackson  
3 Heights Historic District's Queens Center for Gay  
4 Seniors, which provide services to LGBT older  
5 adults, and Make the Road New York Pride youth  
6 group, which serves low-income and LGBT youth.

7 Jackson Heights is also home to the Queens  
8 Pride Parade and Multicultural Festival, the  
9 largest LGBT pride celebration outside of  
10 Manhattan, which is taking place in the  
11 neighborhood's historic district on the first  
12 Sunday of June for 20 years.

13 Furthermore, LGDCQ is headquartered and was  
14 founded in Jackson Heights because of the  
15 neighborhood's sizable LGBT population.

16 LGDCQ strongly believes that the current  
17 councilmanic lines in Western Queens,  
18 particularly the 25th Councilmanic District,  
19 which comprises most of Jackson Heights, are in  
20 accordance with the New York City Charter which  
21 mandates that, "District lines shall keep intact  
22 neighborhoods and communities with established  
23 ties of common interest and association, whether  
24 historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious  
25 or other."

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1           Therefore, we urge the Districting  
2           Commission to keep Jackson Heights within the  
3           25th Councilmanic District. With regard to  
4           electoral politics, dividing Jackson Heights into  
5           two more districts would greatly diminish, if not  
6           silence, the voice of the neighborhood's LGBT  
7           community, which in 2009, contributed to the  
8           historic election of New York City Council Member  
9           Daniel Dromm, the first openly gay Latino  
10          official in Queens and the first to represent the  
11          25th Councilmanic District.

12          We are of the opinion that the existing  
13          councilmanic district lines allowed for these  
14          historic elections and allow for -- (timer dings)  
15          -- LGBT representation in the City's legislative  
16          body. And it is our fervent hope that the  
17          redrawn lines allow for such adequate  
18          representation and keep this prominent Western  
19          Queens LGBT community intact. Thank you very  
20          much. (Applause.)

21          MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Rose  
22          Eng, and after her testimony we will take a  
23          five-minute break.

24          MS. ENG: Good evening, ladies and  
25          gentlemen. My name is Rose Eng and I am here to

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1 testify as a board member on behalf of OCA New  
2 York. Founded in 1976, OCA New York, formerly  
3 known as Organization of Chinese Americans, is a  
4 nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to  
5 protecting and advancing the political, economic,  
6 social and culture rights of Asian Americans.

7 OCA New York is a founding member of AACCRD.  
8 OCA New York encompasses the five boroughs of New  
9 York City and we have got a lot of civic affairs  
10 and organized forums in Queens.

11 OCA New York held a naturalization training  
12 in downtown Flushing that attracted 100 people.  
13 We participate annually in the Flushing New Year  
14 Parade and International Dragon Boat Festival.  
15 We also co-sponsored community education forums  
16 in Flushing, which include the State Assembly  
17 District 40 candidate forum last Thursday held  
18 here at the Flushing Library.

19 OCA New York has met numerous times with the  
20 Queens District Attorney involving crimes against  
21 Asian Americans. OCA New York has also conducted  
22 various candidate forums, which included the  
23 former State Senate Districts 11 and 16, current  
24 City Council District 20 and Congressional  
25 District 6 at the Flushing public library.

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1           We also work with the MinKwon Center for  
2           Community Action, the Chinatown Planning Council,  
3           Korean Community Services and Flushing Chinese  
4           Business Association. Our joint projects include  
5           language access, voter empowerment and  
6           immigration reforms.

7           The 2010 Census shows that there are 500,000  
8           Asians living in Queens. OCA New York's position  
9           on redistricting is based on its community  
10          involvement, input from its Queens members at its  
11          2010 Census. We support City Council District 20  
12          remaining intact and united. Many Flushing  
13          residents face the same issues of street  
14          sanitation problems, parking and access to  
15          language instruction.

16          More than half the population of Flushing  
17          are foreign-born and need bilingual assistance.  
18          Under Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights  
19          Act, poll sites in Queens are required to provide  
20          translated materials and assistance to  
21          Asian-American voters with limited English  
22          proficiency.

23          However, to encourage greater voter  
24          participation, communities of interest must be  
25          joined together so that we can unite more

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1 effectively to elect a candidate of our choice.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Ms. Eng (applause).

4 We will recess and return in five minutes.

5 MR. HACKWORTH: The first speak after the

6 recess will be Tyler Cassell.

7 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

8 MR. ROMANO: Thank you. We are going to  
9 resume taking statements from witnesses, if we  
10 could have some quiet in the room. Thank you.

11 MR. HACKWORTH: We will hare from our first  
12 speaker now, Tyler Cassell, to be followed by  
13 Henry Euler.

14 MR. CASSELL: Should I wait for people to be  
15 seated?

16 MR. HACKWORTH: Go ahead.

17 MR. CASSELL: Hi, good evening. My name is  
18 Tyler Cassell. I took advantage at the break and  
19 I passed out some handouts for everybody there on  
20 my table having the testimony. And I have some  
21 maps. It was a great time to pass those out.  
22 Thank you very much.

23 My name is Tyler Cassell. I am the  
24 president of the North Flushing Civic  
25 Association, which is a homeowners association

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1 consisting of about 90 blocks just north of  
2 Northern Boulevard and Flushing towards  
3 Whitestone. If you take a look at map number  
4 one, that is the first map there, our civic  
5 boundaries are within the purple lines. Council  
6 boundaries are in the heavy black lines, District  
7 19 to the right, District 20 to the left.

8 As you can see, almost all of our civic  
9 association is currently in District 20, except  
10 17 blocks at our easternmost boundary, which is  
11 in District 19. If you would look at map number  
12 2, please, where the zoning is colored in yellow,  
13 this map shows that we have a large yellow swath  
14 of R2A which is really part of the R2A zone to  
15 the east in District 19.

16 The R2A zones extend all the way over to  
17 Little Neck and actually even into Douglaston.  
18 We think that District 19's western boundary  
19 should be shifted to the heavy black line on map  
20 number 2 to include this R2A zone and lower other  
21 zones in R4A, R31 and R32 above it. This change  
22 would better represent the zoning and housing  
23 stock of the complete area.

24 Look at map number 3. Map number 3, you  
25 will see how the yellow line indicates how the

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1 lower residential zones go all the way to the bay  
2 and beyond. A shifting of the district lines  
3 accordingly makes sense. These changes have all  
4 been made in the full report submitted to the  
5 Congress Civic Congress. The highly detailed,  
6 full report is attached to my testimony.

7 Queens Civic Congress is an umbrella  
8 organization of over 100 civic associations in  
9 Northern Queens, proposing district lines changes  
10 to Districts 19, 20, 23 and 24. The lines have  
11 been redrawn to group together the same zoning,  
12 housing stock and community names to better serve  
13 the populations there.

14 A study of the population shifts is also  
15 included. The population changes within the  
16 these zones would remain within the required  
17 numbers for each. It's important for the North  
18 Flushing civic area to be included in District  
19 19, because we share the common issues and  
20 interests of the lower residential community than  
21 we do with the higher apartment zones in District  
22 20 in this area.

23 In fact, we oftentimes attend each others'  
24 civic association meetings because we know each  
25 other. We are so much alike. We have homes with

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1 garages, driveways and yards. We shop locally.  
2 Representatives who live in District 19 can  
3 better represent us.

4 We have little in common with District 20  
5 that includes the Mitchell Newman Apartment  
6 Complex -- (timer dings) -- and the apartment and  
7 commercial area on Northern Boulevard. We have  
8 little in common with the rest of District 20 to  
9 the south, which includes downtown Flushing,  
10 which is a mix of commercial and multi-complexes  
11 and condo complexes. Most of us don't even go  
12 there because of the problematic parking.

13 We urge the Commission to use the lines  
14 represented here when putting the final touches  
15 on District Zone 20.

16 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Cassell. Thank  
17 you for the material (applause).

18 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
19 Henry Euler, to be followed by Terri Pouymari.

20 MR. EULER: My name is Henry Euler. I am  
21 first vice president of the Auburndale  
22 Improvement Association. My civic organization  
23 has over 600 members in Auburndale, Flushing and  
24 western Bayside communities. We have been in  
25 existence for over 100 years.

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1           One of the speakers previously said that the  
2 western boundary of Bayside was the Clearview  
3 Expressway but, in fact, it is Francis Lewis  
4 Boulevard. Just wanted to make one little  
5 correction.

6           Attached to my statement is a map of a  
7 proposal that was submitted to the Queens Civic  
8 Congress, which is an umbrella of over 100 civic  
9 organizations throughout Queens County. And the  
10 proposal feels that it would make more sense to  
11 have the proposed lines for the districting done  
12 according to zoning designations.

13           Now, the particular map that I have attached  
14 to my testimony covers four districts, 19, 20, 23  
15 and 24. 19 and 23 are basically one- and  
16 two-family home districts. The 20th District is  
17 a little bit more dense. It has more apartment  
18 houses and more densely populated areas. And so  
19 we feel that lines should be drawn according to  
20 zoning.

21           Forming districts with similar zoning  
22 designation we feel complies with the  
23 Commission's goals and it will also address the  
24 other concerns and criteria that the Commission  
25 has. We support North Flushing's request to

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1 extend the boundary of the 19th District slightly  
2 westward to include the one- and two-family home  
3 areas in that particular neighborhood.

4 We feel that makes sense and that they are  
5 more appropriately zoned within the 19th  
6 District. Broadway Flushing is just to the east  
7 of them, and we feel those communities should be  
8 united in one district.

9 Now, we have a little problem with the  
10 Auburndale area, which I represent. There is two  
11 asterisks on the map that I have attached.  
12 There's a little part of Auburndale that we feel  
13 should be moved from the 20th to the 19th  
14 District.

15 That's the central part of Auburndale.  
16 That's the smaller area, and the larger area  
17 south of that we feel should be moved to the 23rd  
18 District. And we feel that that would be better  
19 representation for those communities.

20 We would like to thank you again for  
21 listening to our testimony for doing all the work  
22 that you are doing. And we are confident that an  
23 appropriate districting plan will emerge from  
24 your work that will be fair to everyone and  
25 appropriate for the concerns and needs of all

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1 communities in Queens County. Thank you.

2 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Euler  
3 (applause).

4 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
5 Terri Pouymari, to be followed by Charles  
6 Jenkins.

7 MS. POUYMARI: Thank you very much. My name  
8 is Terri Pouymari. I am president of the  
9 Auburndale Improvement Association. Auburndale  
10 is the oldest civics group in New York State. We  
11 were founded in 1905 and we were incorporated in  
12 1915. But we are also one of the largest in New  
13 York State.

14 We go from 162nd Street up to 18th Avenue  
15 and then zigzag over to about 25th Avenue and  
16 207th or the Clearview and south to the Long  
17 Island Expressway. So, we are part of three  
18 councilmanic districts. We are part of two  
19 precincts. We are part of two community boards.

20 And so I am really here to back up and  
21 support the speakers before me. That is, Tyler  
22 with District 19 and North Flushing, to just move  
23 that a little bit -- 19 over a little bit to the  
24 west. And using the same maps that you had been  
25 given, the two asterisks in 20, the first one

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1 near Flushing Cemetery, please move that up to  
2 19.

3 And then the larger one to the east, kind of  
4 southeast of Flushing Cemetery, the asterisk,  
5 move that to 23. We are used to having three  
6 councilmanic districts and we know that you will  
7 do a good job. We think that compiling or  
8 keeping one- and two-family homes together keep  
9 their interests together, because they have  
10 different interests from people who are in  
11 apartment houses or in a more congested area.  
12 Thank you very much.

13 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

14 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Charles  
15 Jenkins, followed by Toni Totten.

16 MR. JENKINS: Good evening. Thank you so  
17 much, chair, for holding these very important  
18 meetings. Again, good evening. My name is  
19 Charles Jenkins. I reside in District 28 for the  
20 last 24 years. I am a union official of the  
21 Transfer Workers Union, Local 100. And thousands  
22 of my members also reside in District 28.

23 I am here to strongly support the redrawing  
24 of Council District 28. The state lines that  
25 were redrawn with the intentions of keeps

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1 communities of common interest together, we know  
2 that when communities of common interest reside  
3 together, they are more unified, elected leaders  
4 can better advocate for the constituents of that  
5 community and the constituents can better hold  
6 their elected officials accountable.

7 The redrawing council lines that was not  
8 consistent with the assembly lines -- excuse  
9 me -- redrawing council lines that are not  
10 consistent with the Assembly's lines will have a  
11 negative impact on the needs and services of the  
12 constituents in that community.

13 Further, I promote that the stated  
14 intentions are keeping communities of common  
15 interest together, community district lines  
16 should mirror State lines as much as possible.  
17 Now, there has been a whole lot said about this  
18 district; rightfully so. That district comprises  
19 of Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Jamaica.

20 We need districts of common interest not to  
21 have multiple representation. This here will  
22 keep the interest of those in the communities not  
23 to have to be ran around. "Well, you live in  
24 this here district, but we don't service you.  
25 You got to go somewhere else. You got to go over

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1 there."

2 I would also like to just bring to  
3 everybody's attention that African Americans is  
4 the largest makeup of this district, followed by  
5 Hispanics and then Asian brothers and sisters.  
6 The African-American community has been for so  
7 long unrepresented. We fought very hard to have  
8 an equal representation in the City Council, as  
9 well as the State level. Just the numbers that  
10 is in that district, African Americans -- (timer  
11 dings) -- some 71,000, followed by Hispanics,  
12 28,000, and Asians, 22.

13 We think that the lines that were drawn by  
14 the assembly will most help this here community.  
15 Thank you so much.

16 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Jenkins  
17 (applause).

18 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Toni  
19 Totten, to be followed by James Trikas.

20 MS. TOTTEN: Good evening. My name is Toni  
21 Totten.

22 MR. ROMANO: Can you please speak into the  
23 microphone.

24 MS. TOTTEN: Better? Okay. Good evening.  
25 My name is Toni Totten. I currently reside in

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1 District 28. I am here to support the redrawing  
2 of Council District 28. The redrawing of the  
3 Council lines to mirror the southern boundaries  
4 of the 32nd Assembly lines that utilize the North  
5 Conduit, a major boulevard which is a naturally  
6 occurring boulevard, would help minimize or  
7 eliminate voter confusion at the polls.

8 For example, I live by 137th Avenue.  
9 Currently, that is the dividing line between  
10 Council Districts 28 and 31. However, district  
11 lines are generally drawn around major  
12 boulevards. 137th Avenue is a secondary road.  
13 It's not a major boulevard.

14 And most of my neighbors become confused  
15 when they learn they are represented by different  
16 council members. This circumstance can also be  
17 applied to the sidewalk and trees program. This  
18 was a capital project organized through the Parks  
19 Department and funded by Council Member Ruben  
20 Wills. The project paid for damages done to  
21 sidewalks as a result of City trees.

22 Due to the physical location of many homes  
23 that were situated outside of the Council  
24 District 28, many residents were not able to  
25 benefit from this program.

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1           As a poll worker, for many years I have  
2 personally witnessed the turmoil due to the  
3 district lines. Because of this confusion,  
4 voters are deterred from exercising their rights  
5 to vote, resulting in a low turnout. For  
6 instance, many voters who were assigned to voting  
7 sites housed at PS 80 and August Martin High  
8 School inadvertently voted for different  
9 representatives.

10           This indirectly results in the constraint of  
11 the fundamental right to participate in the  
12 electoral process. Such unfairness cannot and  
13 should not be allowed to persist. If the Council  
14 lines were drawn to divide districts along main  
15 roads and boulevards as they generally are drawn,  
16 constituents would be much more aware of their  
17 representatives, thus lowering voter confusion  
18 and low turnout rates.

19           The Legislature redrew the new Assembly  
20 district boundaries to adeptly respond to the  
21 evolving population within our communities. It  
22 is in our best interest to align to the State's  
23 concern and goal of combining these communities  
24 of common interest. Thank you very much.

25           MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Ms. Totten.

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1           MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is James  
2           Trikas, to be followed by Council Member Dan  
3           Halloran.

4           MR. TRIKAS: Hi, my name is James Trikas. I  
5           am a community leader here in Flushing. I belong  
6           to a lot of community associations. I ran for  
7           district leader twice, so I approached thousands  
8           of people knocking on their doors. What I am  
9           here to testify is hope that you don't make the  
10          same mistake you did before, or the previous  
11          people in redistricting and the gerrymandering of  
12          the areas.

13          There is a big push now to create a cover  
14          word by claiming "the Asian community." The  
15          Asian community is to link the Chinese community,  
16          the Korean community and the Indian community  
17          under a bigger Asian cover name to claim that  
18          they have the authority or to be recognized to  
19          get their way.

20          Here in Flushing, in the 20th Councilmanic  
21          District, "the Asian community" means "Chinese"  
22          because they are the predominant one of the Asian  
23          community. Now, we see many problems in the  
24          area, and I am all for creating a balanced  
25          district.

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1           You can easily move the borders over to the  
2 African American side border to include more of  
3 them, to the Spanish area to include them, to the  
4 Indian community to include them. You need a  
5 balanced district. We cannot keep subdividing  
6 and segregating other nationalities to create  
7 these little pockets of communities to alienate  
8 them one against the other and segregate them.

9           Segregation, I thought, was supposedly not  
10 allowed from now on, but clearly, that is exactly  
11 what you are doing. You are segregating other  
12 people, isolating other people and not forming a  
13 community together because everyone should be  
14 able to work together, live together, and I  
15 thought we were all Americans (applause).

16           But clearly, that's not the intent of what  
17 is done. Now, if you look at what is happening  
18 in Flushing, look at the store signs. Along  
19 Northern Boulevard, you got the Korean signs.  
20 They don't want to put English on the signs  
21 (applause). You go along Main Street and you go  
22 along Roosevelt Avenue, Chinese signs. They  
23 don't want to put English on the store signs.  
24 They also don't want to hire English-speaking  
25 people in their stores.

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1           There's a big division under using that  
2 cover word "Asian." Now, what I would like you  
3 to do is break that word apart. Separate them  
4 into the Chinese community, Korean community,  
5 Indian community. Now, even among the Chinese  
6 community, you got the differences between the  
7 mainland China and the Taiwanese. They don't get  
8 along.

9           From the Koreans, you got the North Koreans  
10 to the South Koreans. From the Indian  
11 communities, they don't want to be named as  
12 "Asian." It is "South Asian." They make the  
13 distinction. And everybody has cultural  
14 differences. But we need to unite people under  
15 and not create these little pockets of  
16 nationalities where they are not even recognizing  
17 English.

18           And English is the primary language of the  
19 United States (applause), not of New York,  
20 unfortunately. 31 states made English the  
21 official language, four more states pending. So,  
22 35 out of 50 states, 70 percent of U.S. states  
23 have acted. They want to recognize English --  
24 (timer dings). Why are we not recognizing it  
25 now? It's just, we can't keep segregating

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1 communities.

2 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Trikas.

3 MR. TRIKAS: Please recognize that fact.

4 Thank you (applause).

5 MR. SUKHDEO: On a quick point of note,  
6 Mr. Chairman, to the same speaker, this "Asian  
7 American" is not defined by us. It's defined by  
8 the Census Bureau and he should be adjusting this  
9 comment.

10 MR. ROMANO: This is not a debate. Thank  
11 you very much. Thank you.

12 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is  
13 Councilman Dan Halloran, to be followed by Albert  
14 Baldeo.

15 MR. HALLORAN: I guess I always have the  
16 opportunity to go after something controversial  
17 (laughter). First, thank you to this entire  
18 panel for being here and being willing to spend  
19 time to reach out to each the communities. Your  
20 efforts on behalf of the City are greatly  
21 appreciated.

22 It's wonderful to see such a collection of  
23 people who have been so involved in the City,  
24 State and local governments in one way or  
25 another. Let me just first particularly thank

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1 Senator Padavan who I see up there, and of  
2 course, former minority leader of the City  
3 Council, Tom Ognibene.

4 Mr. Chairman, thank you for all that you are  
5 doing to pull together this rather diverse and  
6 rich group. Mr. Hum, it was a pleasure to meet  
7 with you the other day. Thank you for your  
8 explanations.

9 I actually want to make three points. The  
10 first is sort of a tongue-in-cheek commentary,  
11 save our Republicans. There is only two of us  
12 left in Queens (laughter). Let me just say that  
13 outright. I represent the 19th Council District,  
14 one that has been in Republican hands for two out  
15 of the last three council members. We would  
16 certainly like to keep it that way, and do  
17 whatever you can to help me.

18 But on a serious note, the 19th Council  
19 District is actually very fortunate. Along with  
20 my colleague Mark Weprin in the 23rd, we  
21 represent two of the most merely -- most merely  
22 accurate districts in the City of New York in  
23 terms of lack of gerrymandering.

24 That's simply because the Nassau County  
25 border is on our right and the ocean is on our

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1 north and so therefore, there is really nowhere  
2 else for us to go. As you are doing this  
3 redistricting, I know that you will have to deal  
4 with the fact that the U.S. Census undercounted  
5 the population, particularly in this neck of the  
6 woods.

7 There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that  
8 particular areas of Flushing were severely  
9 undercounted for a variety of reasons. And we  
10 will have to contend with that over the course of  
11 the next ten years. Peter Koo and I, who share a  
12 border of the 20th, will probably for some time  
13 to come have to deal with the fact that there  
14 will be a lack of resources allotted to our  
15 districts based on what are perceived numbers,  
16 rather than real ones.

17 Mr. Trikas did have a point, though. The  
18 United States Constitution, in its apportionment  
19 of Census data, never anticipated this country to  
20 become balkanized, and it is something that  
21 certainly has begun to happen. While I am very  
22 grateful, as the child of fifth-generation  
23 immigrants, to be here in this country -- unless  
24 someone in the room is a Native American, there  
25 are very few people who can claim to be

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1 indigenous New Yorkers. Five generations is  
2 about as close as you are going to get around  
3 here.

4 I would love to see a little more effort be  
5 done to promote unity within the community across  
6 sections. Certainly, Mr. Trikas does have in  
7 points with regards to us intentionally creating  
8 communities to satisfy majorities, but I will  
9 remind the Board that Queens is not subject to  
10 the Voting Rights Act, Section IV, and while  
11 Section II may apply to us occasionally, these  
12 districts in Queens don't necessarily need it.

13 So, if there is anything else our council  
14 member can go, I would encourage you to reach out  
15 to us as Mr. Hum has. Please know that you will  
16 have a willing partner in the Council -- (timer  
17 dings) -- and hopefully, as we go forward, we  
18 will be able to find a solution that works for  
19 all New Yorkers. And once again, save your two  
20 Republicans in Queens.

21 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Councilman Halloran  
22 (applause).

23 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
24 Albert Baldeo, to be followed by Janet McCreesh.

25 MR. BALDEO: Thank you very much, members of

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1 this honorable Commission, for the opportunity to  
2 address you today. I also want to pay special  
3 tribute to two of our exemplary public servants  
4 who have excelled in public service, the former  
5 Minority Leader Thomas Ognibene. Thank you very  
6 much, sir, for your service, and Senator Padavan,  
7 both of whom have been great examples for a  
8 community.

9 Is there anyone in this audience who would  
10 like to see Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South  
11 Ozone Park united? Can you say so, please?  
12 (Cheers from audience.) It's been a long time  
13 now. A lot, much of our folks have left. I am  
14 elected democratic district leader, community  
15 advocate in 20th law. I am also the president of  
16 the United Community Alliance, an organization  
17 that empowers and improves the quality of life of  
18 all residents, and one which will seek legal  
19 redress if we are not fairly treated here today.

20 Richmond Hills, Ozone Park and South Ozone  
21 Park should constitute one City Council district.  
22 I have shown you the map there for reasons why.  
23 Gerrymandering has cracked these natural  
24 communities of interest into unrecognized  
25 portions with constant suppression from

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1 participation in even the most basic structures  
2 of government.

3 The issues, problems and solutions and  
4 resources confronting them are overpowered and  
5 overlooked and preference to those confronted  
6 communities like Rochedale Village and the  
7 Jamaican Housing Project over the Van Wyck  
8 Expressway, a natural divide. These communities  
9 should not be lumped together. Consequently, the  
10 present evictions fundamentally prohibit fair and  
11 effective representation to these communities of  
12 interest, violate the New York City Charter and  
13 the Voting Rights Act, Exhibit B. And that you  
14 can see on that map up there.

15 Council District 28 and 30 emasculate  
16 (phonetic) (unintelligible) by the federal  
17 courts, factors which established a community of  
18 interest. Common problems are ignored and common  
19 solutions are impossible to achieve. Rampant  
20 home foreclosures, hospital, medical centers and  
21 schools, kids being stuffed into crowded trailer  
22 parks, locker rooms for classrooms, spiraling  
23 unemployment, increased taxes and the cost of  
24 living have marginalized these communities of  
25 interest from government services and funding.

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1           The need for fair representation at all  
2           levels of government has never been more  
3           compelling. Our fight is best understood with  
4           the closure of area hospitals, high schools as  
5           Richmond High and John Adams, 10 percent rate of  
6           unemployment, high home foreclosures and small  
7           business and you have heard about the MTA not  
8           giving us that that escalator, which would be the  
9           first in our district.

10           Also, we have talked about no other  
11           community that comes close to apartheid of utter  
12           despair. So therefore, it is respectfully  
13           submitted that this august body must fully comply  
14           with all of the factors of the Federal Court, the  
15           Supreme Court and the New York City Charter, who  
16           have recognized the drawings of district lines.

17           We cannot accept separation and  
18           fragmentation of Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park  
19           and Ozone Park which will fundamentally breach  
20           these mandates, shortchange these vital  
21           communities of interest and cannot withstand  
22           legal muster or scrutiny. It is imperative,  
23           therefore, that you reunite Richmond Hill, Ozone  
24           Park and South Ozone Park together, utilizing the  
25           boundaries I have shown you, Van Wyck Expressway

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1 to the east, the Queens/Brooklyn county line to  
2 the west -- (timer dings) -- Jamaica Avenue and  
3 South Conduit and also to the south.

4 There you would have a compact, contiguous  
5 district, one that has common history and  
6 purposes. And I ask you as I close that, when  
7 you look at your families, please do not forget  
8 our family, Richmond, Ozone Park and South Ozone  
9 Park. We are not arguing based on sentiments of  
10 one time of previous speakers. The last were  
11 basis of fact and on the basis of law. I would  
12 ask you to adhere to them specifically and thank  
13 you very much for this opportunity. Thank you  
14 (applause).

15 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
16 Janet McCreesh, followed by Chae No.

17 MS. McCREESH: Good evening. My name is  
18 Janet McCreesh and I am president of the Broadway  
19 Flushing Homeowners Association. Our association  
20 represents 1300 households in an area bounded by  
21 155th Street, 29th Avenue, 170th Street,  
22 Crocheron Avenue and Northern Boulevard.

23 I am here today to ask the Districting  
24 Commission to support the proposed changes to the  
25 19th and 20th Council Districts that affect our

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1 overall neighborhood of North Flushing, as well  
2 as the adjacent community of Auburndale to the  
3 east.

4 As shown in a detailed summary created for  
5 the Queens Civic Congress that was handed out  
6 previously by Tyler Cassell, these proposed  
7 changes would keep intact North Flushing, which  
8 is currently divided between the 19th and 20th  
9 Council Districts in an uneven line from 150th to  
10 153rd streets.

11 North Flushing is almost all made up  
12 detached, single-family houses in R1-2A and R2A  
13 zones. The total area is represented by a number  
14 of civic and homeowner associations, including  
15 the Broadway-Flushing, who all work very closely  
16 together to protect our common interests, North  
17 Flushing.

18 This has included the 2009 North Flushing  
19 rezoning initiated by our neighborhoods by the  
20 Department of City Planning, beautification  
21 projects, public safety and other significant  
22 areas of mutual interest. We are proud of our  
23 ethnically diverse neighborhood and strive to  
24 maintain the entirety of North Flushing as a  
25 pleasant, low-density homeowner community.

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1           By placing the 25 percent of the North  
2           Flushing area west of 150th Street into the 19th  
3           Council District, you would reunite that portion  
4           of our neighborhood with the rest of North  
5           Flushing. This is very important as the  
6           high-density areas to the west and south are  
7           entirely different in character.

8           Similarly, we support the inclusion of all  
9           the Station Road Civic Association in Auburndale,  
10          our neighbors to the southeast to be shifted into  
11          the 19th Council District, instead of being split  
12          in half, as it currently the case. I am  
13          submitting copies of the summary report and  
14          accompanying maps prepared to the Queens Civic  
15          Congress. We urge the Districting Commission to  
16          make North Flushing whole again and place it all  
17          in one council district. Thank you.

18                 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

19                 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
20                 Chae No, followed by Steve Chung.

21                 MR. NO: Good evening. My name is Chae No.  
22                 I am the program coordinator of the Korean  
23                 American Civic Empowerment. I had prepared nine  
24                 copies, but there are 14 of you. So, I will  
25                 just --

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1           So, the Korean American Civic Empowerment,  
2           or KACE, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit community  
3           education and advocacy organization devoted to  
4           empowering Korea Americans and Asian American  
5           communities in New York City. It's founded in  
6           1996. We have been doing this for a while.

7           On behalf of the Korean-American community  
8           in Queens County, KACE urges the Redistricting  
9           Commission to recognize the Asian American Legal  
10          Defense and Education Fund's neighborhood  
11          boundaries. As the Asian-American communities of  
12          interest, all Asian American COIs should be  
13          undivided. A COI is where residents have some  
14          actual shared interest for some common thread of  
15          social, economic or political interests.

16          Keeping us united together is one of the  
17          traditional criteria, and also the New York City  
18          Charter mandates that the Redistricting  
19          Commission keep the COIs intact.

20          KACE and many organizations provided  
21          information about each ethnic community, social,  
22          economic and geographic boundaries to draw the  
23          neighborhood maps. AALDEF has already submitted  
24          that map with neighborhood boundaries that KACE  
25          strongly supports, as we were all interviewed by

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1 Glen.

2 Along COIs, KACE, the Korean-American  
3 community, are especially interested in two  
4 neighborhoods, Flushing and Bayside, where Korean  
5 Americans are concentrated. Most parts of  
6 Flushing Asian American COIs are included in  
7 Council District 20. However, the Bayside Asian  
8 COI is divided into Council Districts 19 and 23.

9 KACE respectfully requests the Districting  
10 Commission to include Bayside COI into Council  
11 District 19 without any division, because Asian  
12 Americans in Bayside COI are sharing  
13 characteristics of Asian composition, ethnicity,  
14 language, limited English proficiency,  
15 segregation experience, and sharing voter  
16 registration schools with Council District 19.

17 Again, KACE strongly urges the Restricting  
18 Commission to recognize AALDEF's neighborhood  
19 maps COI, and to include Bayside Asian COI into  
20 Council District 19. And in reference to  
21 Mr. Trikas over there, the "Asian American" term  
22 was mandated by the Office of Management and  
23 Budget in 1977 and was placed into the United  
24 States Census in 1970, so therefore, it was not  
25 us who made the term, it was the United States

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1 Government. (Applause.)

2 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. No.

3 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
4 Steve Chung, to be followed by Jamilla Uddin.

5 MR. CHUNG: Hi, good evening, Commissioners  
6 and fellow citizens. My name is Steve Chung,  
7 president of the United Chinese Association of  
8 Brooklyn. I am from Brooklyn. We were founded  
9 in 2002 and our goal is to improve the well-being  
10 of the Chinese immigrants and family in  
11 Bensonhurst, Brooklyn.

12 We are also a member of an Asian Commission  
13 force, commonly called AACCRD. And we also  
14 endorse one of our member organizations, the  
15 Asian American Legal Defense and Education Funds  
16 United. We talk with -- people present this  
17 before.

18 And today, I would like to address one of  
19 the issues that some of the general public and  
20 media claim that the Asian organization will  
21 segregate our neighborhood by drawing Asian  
22 population into a political majority district,  
23 and I would like to express the following  
24 opinions.

25 It is human nature to gather and live

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1 together in a cultural environment that people  
2 feel comfortable and familiar with. Asians are  
3 not the only group to testify against splitting  
4 up their neighborhood during redistricting  
5 process. In fact, in 2011, during the State  
6 redistricting public hearing, the Russian and the  
7 Orthodox Jewish community also ask that their  
8 community not be divided.

9 Number two, our neighborhood organization in  
10 Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, is divided into four City  
11 Council districts. One of our district  
12 councilwomen give us \$1,000, more than half  
13 (unintelligible) in discretionary credits, to  
14 support our youth program. When I asked him for  
15 more money, he told me that this was the best he  
16 could do, and that Asian population only occupy a  
17 small portion of his constituents.

18 And number three, drawing an Asian  
19 population majority district has nothing to do  
20 with segregating our neighborhood boundary or  
21 disturbing the harmony of our cultural diversity.  
22 We will greet our same neighbor in the morning.  
23 Children will go to the same school and we can  
24 eat at any restaurant that we like.

25 The only difference is that we can elect a

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1 councilman who can join our rally and fight for  
2 our need and for all residents of the communities  
3 also. And number four, it is the law under the  
4 Voting Rights Act, Section II, Asian community  
5 district can be drawn to avoid vote illusion,  
6 thank you (applause).

7 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Chung.

8 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
9 Jamilla Uddin, followed by Phil Konigsberg.

10 MS. UDDIN: Hi, my name is Jamilla Uddin. I  
11 am the chair of the Natural Youth Committee of  
12 the Alliance of South Asian American Labor. The  
13 Alliance of South Asian American Labor is a  
14 community-based organization comprised of South  
15 Asian Americans that are part of the trade  
16 unionist movement.

17 We seek to share our experiences and  
18 politics and labor unions to create a more  
19 dynamic culture of civic participation in the  
20 wider South Asian American Community. We are a  
21 membership-based organization with chapters in  
22 Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens. The current council  
23 district lines can be shifted to better serve our  
24 community and increase our political standing in  
25 the city.

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1           Presently, the neighborhoods of Richmond  
2 Hill and South Ozone Park, Queens, one of the  
3 densest concentrations of South Asian Americans  
4 in this city, are gerrymandered into four council  
5 districts. This community of interest must be  
6 united and has enough population to be its own  
7 district.

8           The neighborhood of Jamaica Hills, Queens is  
9 also one of the most substantial concentrations  
10 of South Asian Americans. Presently, this  
11 community is united in one council district, 24th  
12 District, and we urge you to maintain its unity.  
13 Similarly, the neighborhoods of Bellerose and  
14 Floral Park, Queens represent another substantial  
15 concentration of South Asian Americans.

16           This community of interest is presently  
17 united in one council district, 23rd District.  
18 And we encourage you to maintain the unity of  
19 this community of interest. Although these  
20 latter enclaves are well preserved in separate  
21 districts, we believe that it is beneficial to  
22 unite them into a single district, and we  
23 encourage you to explore this option.

24           These communities do not only share a  
25 similar racial identity and immigration history,

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1 but also language, rate of homeownership, family  
2 structure and common political area. Joining  
3 these two areas would not be unprecedented.  
4 Parts of these two enclaves have been combined by  
5 the State Legislature into the new 24th Assembly  
6 District.

7 And we believe this body can do even better  
8 for this community by including the entirety of  
9 these enclaves together. We implore you to keep  
10 our community united and adhere to your duties  
11 under the Charter of the City of New York to  
12 preserve communities of interest. Thank you.

13 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

14 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
15 Phil Konigsberg, followed by Sondra Peeden.  
16 Sondra Peeden? So, we will hear from Phil  
17 Konigsberg and then Alexander Rias.

18 MR. KONIGSBERG: Commissioners, thank you.  
19 I would like to get this mic straight first.  
20 Thank you. I would like to give a personal hello  
21 to Senator Padavan, who I've considered a friend  
22 for almost 40 years, and the rest of the  
23 commissioners.

24 I live in District 19, Councilman Halloran's  
25 district, and I basically don't have any problems

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1 with the current boundaries of the 19th. I would  
2 endorse the first three speakers who spoke after  
3 the break, Terri, Tyler and Henry, I believe,  
4 their thoughts of moving the less-dense portions  
5 of 20 into 19 and I think highly of their  
6 concerns. Other than that, thank you and good  
7 luck.

8 MR. ROMANO: Thank you very much.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
10 Alexander Rias, followed by Dominick Pistone.

11 MR. RIAS: Hello distinguished Members of  
12 the City of New York Districting Commission. My  
13 name is Alexander Rias and I am here to present  
14 testimony on behalf of the Black, Latino, Asian  
15 Caucus of the City Council of New York, also on  
16 behalf of its co-chairs, Council Member Robert  
17 Jackson and Councilman Fernando Cabrera, and  
18 lastly, on behalf of all 26 members of our  
19 caucus.

20 Our constituencies represent well over four  
21 million residents of this city. As a citywide  
22 caucus, we have been vocal on a series of social  
23 issues of justice and equality, in addition to  
24 budget and legislation.

25 Our ability to serve our individual and

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1 collective constituencies hinge upon this very  
2 process of redistricting every ten years. First,  
3 the BLA Caucus is pleased that the Commission  
4 appointments have resulted in putting together a  
5 diverse group tasked with the difficult  
6 undertaking of this process.

7 To ensure that communities are best served  
8 and represented, diversity must be prevalent at  
9 every step and stage of this process, even beyond  
10 the members of the Commission. The racial and  
11 gender diversity of the Commission, at the staff  
12 level, at all staff levels is paramount.

13 The Caucus understands that, as this process  
14 rolls on, and some of the more arduous aspects of  
15 the process, further staff will be added. And we  
16 look forward to applauding this Commission on  
17 making a concerted effort to ensure that all  
18 levels of this Commission reflect the diversity  
19 of this great city.

20 Next, while the Voting Right Act protect  
21 African Americans, Latino Americans and Asian  
22 Americans as racial groups, challenges to the act  
23 which the Supreme Court refute the racial  
24 predomination and argues that the districting  
25 process must protect communities of significant

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1 cultural, economic, political economic and social  
2 from.

3 In resolving the lack of clarity in these  
4 conflicting premises, the Commission must be  
5 transparent in its interpretation of these legal  
6 mandates. After all, life and death is by the  
7 power of the tongue. The power of community  
8 voices rally around commonality, to spur on  
9 change, to vote. No one knows the issue of the  
10 community like those who live in it.

11 If the voices of a particular community are  
12 disjointed in their council district identities,  
13 their power of the vote is fractured as a result.  
14 Dramatic changes in New York City population have  
15 occurred in communities of color, particularly in  
16 the Latino and Asian communities, and migration  
17 is prevalent throughout this city. Despite  
18 totaling 13 percent of New York City's  
19 population, no New York Congressional  
20 representative nor New York State Senator is  
21 Asian.

22 Just one assembly district is represented by  
23 an Asian member, and just two members of City  
24 Council, members of our Caucus, are Asian. While  
25 the Caucus is not advocating for specific lines

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1 at this time, it is committed to the protection  
2 of the common community voices as a priority in  
3 this process.

4 The process of mitigating these -- (timer  
5 dings) -- will require special attention and  
6 careful detail by the Commission. I am going to  
7 wrap up. It is also expected that the Commission  
8 interprets the laws upheld in court that prevent  
9 prison-based gerrymandering.

10 It is our understanding that the Commission  
11 is currently reviewing prison population data,  
12 and it is our hope that these figures are used  
13 appropriately. The diluting of votes and  
14 gerrymandering has hurt communities and resources  
15 and representation that can prevent many of those  
16 from entering the prison.

17 Prison-based gerrymandering has  
18 overwhelmingly affected the black and Latino  
19 communities, as those populations account for  
20 81 percent of the New York State prison  
21 population. Fully implementing the law, the law  
22 can undoubtedly change the course of many young  
23 people's lives and change many communities around  
24 the city for the better.

25 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Rias.

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1 MR. RIAS: I have submitted a copy of this  
2 for you all. Thank you.

3 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
4 Dominick Pistone, followed by Murray Berger.

5 MR. PISTONE: My name is Dominick Pistone.  
6 I am president of the Kew Gardens Civic  
7 Association. I represent a section of Kew  
8 Gardens represented by this map. Basically runs  
9 from Jackie Robinson Parkway to 85th Avenue, from  
10 Queens Boulevard to Park Lane South. You can  
11 walk it east/west in 15 minutes, north/south in  
12 15 minutes.

13 Until 2000, we were represented by four  
14 Assembly Members, two State Senators, two  
15 Congressmen and two City Council people. I  
16 sympathize with the members of the Asian  
17 community. You can be subdivided into impotence  
18 and indivisibility. That is pretty much what  
19 happened to us. We got lucky last time around  
20 and we were reduced to two Assembly people. In  
21 the last redistricting, we lost. We wound up  
22 with three State Senators, one of whom represents  
23 exactly two blocks in this area.

24 We are represented finally by one  
25 Congressman, I am cynical enough to believe

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1 because that district was drawn by a judge and  
2 not drawn by a redistricting Commission. We are  
3 talking you to take a look at this very  
4 well-defined area and put it in one CD, for a  
5 change. At one point, four blocks were split  
6 between 29 and 30. Now, it's three blocks that  
7 are split between 29 and 30, and there is really  
8 no reason for it.

9 This is a community of interest more along  
10 the lines of spirit than of anything else. There  
11 is no really dominant religion, not anymore.  
12 Used to be Christian, at one time it was Jewish.  
13 Now there is a mix. It is predominantly property  
14 owners, either homeowners, co-op owners or condo  
15 owners. It is pretty much the same economic  
16 class. When people say they live in Kew Gardens,  
17 this is what they mean, not the City planning Kew  
18 Gardens and certainly not some real estate  
19 agent's idea of Kew Gardens, which at least one  
20 that I heard of, they thought it stretches down  
21 to Atlantic Avenue. Sorry all you people in  
22 Ozone Park, but that's what the real estate agent  
23 guy thinks.

24 I would ask you to put this together in one  
25 district, either 29 or 30. Last redistricting,

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1 we tried to be put together in District 29. The  
2 then-Council Member Melinda Katz actually fought  
3 to have it done. She had no problem with it,  
4 wanted to have it done but for some reason, the  
5 district lines came down from Mt. Sinai on stone  
6 tablets and it didn't happen.

7 My understanding is, we are not at the stone  
8 tablet stage yet, so I ask you to look at this  
9 and put us in one district. We are already  
10 subdivided enough. We don't really need to be  
11 subdivided at the City level any further. Thank  
12 you very much.

13 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Pistone.

14 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Murray  
15 Berger, to be followed by Reverend Richard Hogan.

16 MR. BERGER: Good evening. I am Murray  
17 Berger, CEO open of the Kew Gardens Council for  
18 Recreation and the Arts, and the executive  
19 chairman of the Kew Gardens Civic Association. I  
20 echo everything that Dominick Pistone, the  
21 association president has just told you, and say  
22 amen to all of it.

23 Our request of you is a very minor one,  
24 namely that the extreme lower corners, the  
25 southwest corner of Kew Gardens, which is now in

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1 a different council district, be combined with  
2 the rest of Kew Gardens and kept in one council  
3 district.

4 The people in that district in those few  
5 blocks have literally been without, or I should  
6 say, literally they have had a council person,  
7 but figuratively or practically, they have been  
8 people without a council. Because when they call  
9 the Council person who represents them, they are  
10 a meaningless minority who aren't even recognized  
11 as part of the district.

12 And this has been going on for too many  
13 years. It's a very easy adjustment on your part.  
14 I hope you can make it. Thank you very much.

15 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Berger  
16 (applause).

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
18 Reverend Richard Hogan, followed by Au, A-U,  
19 Hogan.

20 REVEREND HOGAN: Good evening distinguished  
21 members and council. I am Reverend Hogan, a  
22 liaison and chaplain for the Baisley Park Houses,  
23 and I am speaking on behalf of my church, Divine  
24 Ministry which resides in District 28.

25 I just want to point out a few things. I

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1 know I have three minutes. I just support the  
2 changing of the redistricting, but as we heard  
3 from one of our colleagues earlier speak about  
4 that a lot of times, we were hurt in the last  
5 redistricting.

6 And we just want to come and give support so  
7 that we won't miss out on several things that we  
8 have been missing out on. In the interest of  
9 promoting fiscal responsible and ensuring that  
10 resources are allocated fairly, it is important  
11 that Baisley Park Houses no longer be separated  
12 into two councilmanic districts just like South  
13 Jamaica Houses, which is governed by one council  
14 member, Baisley Park Houses should also be under  
15 the jurisdiction of a single council member.

16 This eliminates the unfortunate situation of  
17 the perceived inequitable distribution of  
18 funding, resources and the City services  
19 presently occurring among the houses. The  
20 resources I speak of include, but are not limited  
21 to, NYCHA -- that's New York City Housing  
22 Authority -- security cameras, City services and  
23 recreational amenities.

24 Let me just say real quick in our  
25 communities, there are eight buildings and they

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1 are separated into three. You have the housing  
2 development in the Cedar Manor, which is private.  
3 There are eight buildings and there are fences  
4 that separate these buildings, and there are  
5 fences that separate them and now they are, at  
6 one point in that community, you have two council  
7 members that split across the street.

8 That means you have one council member on  
9 two buildings and for six buildings. So  
10 (unintelligible) and then complains about  
11 situations; they don't know who to explain to.

12 Let me just give this real quick. Several  
13 years ago, there was a major project in District  
14 28. And it was, I think, basketball courts and  
15 some of the maintenance, I think, about a \$14  
16 million project. And right across the street,  
17 the community felt left out because one side of  
18 the building was community was done, and the  
19 other side was left out.

20 This is why we need to have -- and when we  
21 addressed it to the councilmanic process, they  
22 explained that the other council members thought  
23 that it would be under their lots, but it was not  
24 so. The purported position of unification  
25 endorses impartiality and removes any view of

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1 onesidedness. It is important that the residents  
2 of the Baisley Park Houses perceive that they are  
3 being treated as a whole as it relates to the  
4 recent reset of the City services support.

5 This understanding will only be realized if  
6 unification is accomplished. Ultimately,  
7 unifying the Baisley Park Houses will provide the  
8 community with a one-stop model of service aiming  
9 to provide resources that will be mutually  
10 beneficial to circumstances.

11 We are going to submit this also. And there  
12 is so much to say in such a little time. But in  
13 our community, we have programs that have been  
14 put in place, but never ever processed out. And  
15 we are a suffering community and we need to be  
16 included and not to miss out on such a great  
17 important time in this year. And we thank you  
18 for your help and thank you for listening to us  
19 today. And we will submit this. God bless you  
20 and thank you.

21 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Reverend Hogan  
22 (applause).

23 MR. HACKWORTH: A handwriting issue, but I  
24 think if our preregistration is right, our next  
25 speaker is Robert Hogan?

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1 MR. HOGAN: Yes.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: To be followed by Louise  
3 Bell.

4 MR. HOGAN: Good evening. I am the  
5 president of Baisley Park Houses. What the  
6 reverend just spoke about, I am going to  
7 reiterate, that we really have some really  
8 defined programs, and also those programs that  
9 never took place became problems.

10 One of the situations that we had ten years  
11 ago when there was a redistricting and a rezoning  
12 of the area, what it did is split down right in  
13 the middle, as the reverend had said, and it  
14 created a lot of complications where people began  
15 to think they were different.

16 I am the president of five buildings,  
17 approximately 1,430 families. And what has  
18 happened even as recent as Saturday, which was  
19 our family day, you know, people do not like to  
20 cross the street because they believe that they  
21 are not a part of this building. And I don't  
22 think that the zoning committee consciously would  
23 want to do something that would separate people.

24 So, we have to be very careful when we draw  
25 lines that takes one City Council member and put

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1           them here and another one over there.  It's time  
2           to get services.  You know, a lot of money is  
3           just put on one side, like the \$360,000 that was  
4           allocated for part of the programs that was  
5           coming out of the community center has since been  
6           closed since 2009.

7                     Had there just been one City Council member,  
8           he would not have lost that idea of saying, "Why  
9           is this community center being closed?"  When he  
10          knows it's not just taking care of these  
11          buildings, but he had two other buildings which  
12          is approximately about the other 800 families.

13                    So, what happens when you look at how this  
14          zoning was separating the community, you know,  
15          you start separating building by building out.  
16          And people start thinking they are different.  
17          One side doesn't come to the other side.  They  
18          don't incorporate as family members anymore.

19                    When I grew up in the area, it was like  
20          that, you know, everybody was together.  And what  
21          happened I am afraid of as the kids continue to  
22          grow, they will continue to separate.  That is  
23          why we emphasize that, you know, we do include  
24          not only redrawing the lines so that you include  
25          all five buildings inside, but also just have one

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1 council member to see over those five buildings.

2 It is very important. It's a very good  
3 neighborhood. If you look in NYCHA, you have  
4 seen recently there have been unbelievable things  
5 in the news about how bad it is to live in public  
6 housing. Actually, this is the fifth-lowest  
7 public housing in crime. In other developments,  
8 senior developments, if you look at what happens,  
9 this, really, the lowest crime, if you look at  
10 the general population in the City of New York.

11 So, it took a lot of effort with the  
12 separation of the councilmen and the Council  
13 members in the last ten years to try to make  
14 these people believe they are one and they are  
15 whole. And I believe and I trust that, in your  
16 wisdom, that you will make the right choice and  
17 do the right thing tonight. I want to thank you  
18 for your time tonight.

19 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Hogan  
20 (applause).

21 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Louise  
22 Bell, followed by Ethel Chen.

23 MS. BELL: Good evening. My name is Louise  
24 Bell and I currently reside in District 28. I am  
25 the site director for a program at PS 140. On

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1 the subject of education, PS 140 was overlooked  
2 with regard to the distance-learning program.  
3 This is a program that allows children to  
4 interact with other children across the district  
5 with the possibilities of them just using Smart  
6 Boards, video conferencing with other students,  
7 which allows them to just help each other in  
8 their education.

9 It is important to note that PS 140 is not  
10 housed in District 28, but it is in District 29.  
11 Many of the students that reside in District 28  
12 go to PS 140. This is unacceptable, as the  
13 institution should have included in the list of  
14 schools being given access to such academic  
15 resources.

16 However, this is through no fault of any one  
17 council member, but instead a result of the  
18 positioning of the Council district lines. But  
19 for the exclusion of PS 140 residing in the South  
20 Jamaica area, would have been fortunate enough to  
21 be a host of the distance-learning program.

22 This is technology that is presently at  
23 other schools, but not at PS 140, which  
24 creates -- it just creates a major education  
25 dysfunction, okay? Because the students at

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1 PS 140 are lacking the resources that they need.

2 I was once a student at PS 140, a parent of  
3 two students who graduated from PS 140. And by  
4 the grace of God, I have a son who received a  
5 scholarship to go to another school. In saying  
6 this, I have been at PS 140 for a while. Even as  
7 a parent volunteer, I have seen many things that  
8 were done and also the things that weren't done.

9 The students are missing the key component,  
10 which is their education, and that's a  
11 distance-learning program. I have seen and heard  
12 the passing of the buck, which when it comes to  
13 PS 140, and the things they are in need of.  
14 Please, I ask you -- no, I urge you to please  
15 reconsider the redrawing of the Council District  
16 28. Thank you.

17 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Ms. Bell.

18 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Ethyl  
19 Chen, to be followed by Herbert Binger.

20 MS. CHEN: My name is Ethel Chen. I am  
21 coming here to present the concerns of 20's City  
22 Council. According to the numbers, we have 14  
23 City Council districts. First, I request, stop  
24 gerrymandering. Second, this City Council seat,  
25 around the 20th with the population rises

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1 161,000.

2 I have found out there are four districts  
3 have more population than this one. By the way,  
4 I would say, Chinese and the Koreans, they are  
5 brothers and sisters. They share the common  
6 concern, common interest. Most of them are new  
7 immigrants. They should be put together intact.  
8 So, I suggest we should have more -- include more  
9 population in this district, like, to move a  
10 little farther to north, to south and east  
11 direction.

12 Like, the number one population the City  
13 Council, they have 173,000. And you know there  
14 are so many Korean and Chinese in this district,  
15 we should move to south and east. We should have  
16 more population in the district, not to divide  
17 this district into two. Thank you very much  
18 (applause).

19 MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Ms. Chen.

20 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
21 Herbert Binger, to be followed by Maria Roca.

22 MR. BINGER: My name is Herbert Binger. I  
23 am the president of the Diabetes Research  
24 Associates for a Cure. I am from the 31st  
25 Assembly District in Far Rockaway. And I rise to

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1 support the unification of Richmond Hill, Ozone  
2 Park and South Ozone Park.

3 I do this because, in the years past, I have  
4 been a real estate investor that invested in  
5 those areas. I have gone back into that area  
6 because I teach diabetes education. Upon my  
7 return, there is a substantial amount of Asian  
8 people and they are suffering very much with  
9 diabetes.

10 What does diabetes have to do with the  
11 community? That is disjointed. I would speak at  
12 one senior citizens center and I have to go to  
13 another one. And I listen to the complaints of  
14 the people. And their complaints, I said, "What  
15 happened to your councilman?" And they will call  
16 a name. And we will walk two or three blocks.

17 And the same question, the same problem,  
18 "What happened to your councilman or your  
19 Assemblywoman?" And they will call another name.  
20 Now, the Richmond Hill/Ozone Park/South Ozone  
21 Park is the only place in the English language  
22 which doesn't mean the same. "Unite" does not  
23 mean that the people have a voice, and a voice in  
24 English that would speak through one channel and  
25 someone to represent them.

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1           So, at this stage, I would echo the  
2           sentiment of all that is here. In 2013, I should  
3           be seeking the 31st Assembly District in Far  
4           Rockaway and I hope that I will be of some help  
5           to the Richmond Hill community. Thank you.

6           (Applause.)

7           MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Binger.

8           MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Maria  
9           Roca, followed by James Gallagher, Jr.

10          MS. ROCA: Good evening. I'm Maria Roca. I  
11          also hail from Brooklyn, because unfortunately,  
12          the outreach didn't get to us. And I encourage  
13          the panel -- and I thank you for your time and  
14          attention -- to try your best by whatever means  
15          to make sure that the most highest number of  
16          people in this city find out about these  
17          hearings.

18          I am a resident of the 38th Councilmanic  
19          District. Proposals for the districts have been  
20          made. I am also the founder and chair of the  
21          Friends of Sunset Park, Sunset Park, not only the  
22          neighborhood, but Sunset Park, the park, a  
23          26-acre public space where the world meets every  
24          day.

25          Our neighborhoods, our city, indeed our

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1 society at large, cannot afford to marginalize  
2 along any demographic, be it economic, racial,  
3 ethnic, religious, class, sexual orientation,  
4 political or whatever else the demographics  
5 experts have come up to date.

6 The promise and the success of this city and  
7 this country is democracy. And democracy is a  
8 participatory process -- I take that back; a  
9 participatory and collaborative process. I  
10 understand that to mean that all of us, all of  
11 us, have a responsibility to work together for  
12 the common good.

13 That common good does not mean that one  
14 group has more political power than another. It  
15 means that there should not be a child that goes  
16 without dinner. The "common good" means that  
17 everyone has a roof over their head, that they  
18 have health care, and not about what street do  
19 you live on?

20 So, I beg you to do your work well. Use the  
21 highest standards, best practices, to make sure  
22 not only the 38th Councilmanic District, but all  
23 districts include everyone, because that is how  
24 we learn from each other. That is how we learn  
25 how to respect each other.

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1           Tolerance, respect is only when you know  
2           what makes that other person tick that may not  
3           look like you, may have a very different life  
4           experience than you do. And that is what makes  
5           New York great. Thank you for your time.

6           MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Ms. Roca.

7           MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
8           James Gallagher, Jr., followed by F.E. Scanlon.

9           MR. GALLAGHER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
10          the fellow chairpersons. This evening, my name  
11          is James Gallagher, Jr. and I am representing two  
12          organizations, the Fresh Meadows Tenants  
13          Association executive board, and I am also  
14          president of the Fresh Meadows Homeowners Civic  
15          Association, and I am also a member of Community  
16          Board 8. And I work for the DEP. If anybody  
17          doesn't pay their water bills, I will take their  
18          payments. I just wanted to cheer you up a little  
19          bit.

20          We are just asking that -- I live in  
21          District 23. We are asking that the eastern  
22          border can be moved east to Utopia Parkway so  
23          it's covered by one council district. Currently,  
24          my civic association is split in half between the  
25          24th and the 23rd.

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1           And I would ask that the line go down Utopia  
2 Parkway from the expressway to Union Turnpike and  
3 then go back east to the current boundaries. And  
4 basically, that is my request on there.

5           Now, lastly, I just want to personally thank  
6 our former State Senator Frank Padavan for all  
7 his support. Last week, there was a historical  
8 vote by the New York City Landmarks Commission  
9 about the Brinckerhoff Cemetery. They decided to  
10 landmark it. Frank has been a tremendous support  
11 for that over the years. Thank you (applause).

12           MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Gallagher.

13           MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is F.E.  
14 Scanlon, and we will call again Sondra Peeden.

15           MS. SCANLON: Good evening, ladies and  
16 gentlemen, members of the audience, the  
17 community. I want to first remark how  
18 extraordinary it is, 1962, 50 short years ago,  
19 the United States Supreme Court then took up the  
20 issue of one man/one vote. How far we've come;  
21 how little we've come.

22           And I think that is why we are all here  
23 tonight, to look anew at that critical  
24 relationship called voting, the  
25 once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in

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1 a meaningful and a concrete way in  
2 self-government.

3 I have prepared some remarks and I would  
4 like to share them with you for your  
5 consideration. Redistricting the New York City  
6 Council, reclaiming New York for and by New  
7 Yorkers, the notion that a representative  
8 democracy one can choose who will vote is  
9 preposterous.

10 That assertion is made even more outrageous  
11 when one factors in who that decision maker will  
12 be, namely, the individual who seeks to be  
13 elected and/or reelected. Let's be very clear.  
14 When one says, "The fix is in," that artifice is  
15 not the exclusive purview of current  
16 officeholders. Indeed not. There are many  
17 out-of-officeholders who benefit  
18 disproportionately by this very crafty  
19 rearrangement of democracy.

20 They too benefit who play this political  
21 charade from the sidelines. That, I submit, is  
22 overwhelmingly why redistricting has been the  
23 bane of 20th-century New York City. If all those  
24 who have gone along to get along were not so  
25 substantially perceived to have clout and

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1 influence, this political razzle-dazzle would  
2 never have flourished so successfully within the  
3 five boroughs of the City of New York.

4 Given the well-deserved reputation of the  
5 New York State Legislature, except, of course,  
6 for the former officeholder, Senator Padavan, is  
7 an at-best dysfunctional entity. Many assume  
8 that this bastardization of democracy is  
9 exercised exclusively north of New York City.  
10 Nothing could be further south from the truth.

11 Given the basic tenet of redistricting, that  
12 the officer holder and/or office seeker gets to  
13 draw the lines seeks to dictate -- (timer  
14 dings) -- who will be privileged to vote for him  
15 or her is a tomfoolery that no longer can stand  
16 the test of time. My testimony has been  
17 submitted. I wish well and I thank you so much.

18 MR. ROMANO: Thank you (applause).

19 MR. HACKWORTH: We will call again Sondra  
20 Peeden. Otherwise, next we have David Bucknor,  
21 to be followed by Haron Hargraid (phonetic). Are  
22 you David Bucknor?

23 MR. BUCKNOR: Yes. Good evening, everyone.  
24 My name is David Bucknor. I currently reside in  
25 District 28. I am also a member of Community

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1 Board 12. And I am here to support the redrawing  
2 of Council District 28. My testimony is as it  
3 relates to the effective representation of the  
4 community boards, we are here to testify that  
5 these community boards represented communities of  
6 common interest.

7 Community boards serve as conduits to assist  
8 the community and its constituents in the  
9 delivery of City services. However, it is  
10 difficult to assert and see major change and  
11 significant issues when those afflicted make up a  
12 minority.

13 For the purposes of this testimony, we will  
14 concentrate on Community Boards 9, 10 and 12.  
15 Within Councilmanic District 28, the majority  
16 community boards are Community Boards 10 and 12,  
17 making up 68.5 percent of representation. When  
18 reviewing Councilmanic District 31, we all know  
19 that the representation for the Community Board  
20 12 is only 5 percent, making Councilmanic  
21 District 31 a minority stakeholder of Community  
22 Board 12.

23 If we take into this account and in tandem  
24 with the new State lines which have included  
25 geographic areas, taking into account naturally

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1 occurring borders of Farmers Boulevard in the  
2 North Conduit, we can logically surmise the  
3 following, the same patterns of Councilmanic  
4 District 28 will employ the full power of  
5 Community Board 12.

6 Thus, this increases the majority  
7 representation of 68.5 percent to 73.5 percent,  
8 majority representation of Community Boards 10  
9 and 12. If we continue down this path of  
10 reasoning, looking at Community Board 9,  
11 Councilmanic District 28 only represents 11.6  
12 white Councilmanic District 32 represents  
13 37.2 percent.

14 If we combine Councilmanic Districts 28 and  
15 32, it raises the majority representation of  
16 Community Board 9 within the confines of  
17 Councilmanic District 32 to above 47 percent,  
18 which not only allowed for more favorable  
19 advocacy when dealing with communities of common  
20 interest, but fits along the naturally occurring  
21 borders of Lefferts Avenue and 101st Avenue.

22 MR. ROMANO: Mr. Bucknor, do you have your  
23 testimony or statement in a form you can share  
24 with us in writing?

25 MR. BUCKNOR: Yes, I do.

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1           MR. ROMANO: Great. You can finish. I  
2           didn't mean to interrupt you, but if you could  
3           submit that in writing, that would be helpful.

4           MR. BUCKNOR: I definitely could submit it  
5           in writing. And that concludes my testimony  
6           today. Thank you for your time.

7           MR. ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Bucknor  
8           (applause).

9           MR. HACKWORTH: Our last registered speaker  
10          is Haron Hargraid. Haron Hargraid?

11          MR. ROMANO: We have called the names of  
12          everyone who was reregistered and everyone who is  
13          registered here tonight. If there is anyone else  
14          here who would like to address the Commission, if  
15          they could just give the name to our staff person  
16          and we will be happy to hear your statement now.

17          Otherwise, we are going to recess for five  
18          minutes and we will probably remain for a while,  
19          hoping that some other members of the community  
20          will come, because we know we have told everyone  
21          that we would run to 9:00, and it's conceivable  
22          that some people will be arriving later. I don't  
23          see anyone coming up to speak, so I think we will  
24          adjourn for five minutes and then reconvene.

25          (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

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1 MR. ROMANO: Thank you all. We are  
2 reconvened now. Is there anyone else who would  
3 like to address the Commission? Seeing that no  
4 one else seems to want to address the Commission,  
5 we are going to be adjourned. The Commission  
6 will be adjourned until Thursday in the Bronx.

7 And staff will remain for the next 20 to  
8 30 minutes to take any written submissions in the  
9 event that someone arrives late and wants to  
10 address us, we will at least take their written  
11 statement. Thank you very much for joining us  
12 this evening and we hope to see you again soon.

13 (Whereupon, at 8:24 p.m., the above matter  
14 was concluded.)

15  
16 I, JOSHUA B. EDWARDS, a Notary Public for  
17 and within the State of New York, do hereby  
18 certify that the above is a correct transcription  
19 of my stenographic notes.

20 

21 \_\_\_\_\_  
22 JOSHUA B. EDWARDS, RPR  
23  
24  
25

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