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CITY OF NEW YORK

2012-2013 DISTRICTING COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

Lehman College

250 Bedford Park Boulevard West

Bronx, New York 10468

August 23, 2012

5:33 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE:

- JUSTIN YU
- JOHN ROBERT
- ROXANNE J. PERSAUD
- GLORIA CARVAJAL WOLFE
- MADELINE PROVENZANO
- LINDA LIN
- ROBERT HART
- BENITO ROMANO, Chairman
- JAMILA PONTON BRAGG
- OSCAR ODOM, III
- FRANK PADAVAN
- SCOTT CERULLO
- KAMILLAH M. HANKS
- BERNEL-ARTHUR RICHARDSON

## NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION

1           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Good evening. My name is  
2 Benito Romano and I am the chair of the New York  
3 City Districting Commission. Thank you for  
4 coming tonight and welcome to the New York City  
5 Districting Commission's public hearing for the  
6 Bronx. I want to especially thank Lehman College  
7 and Dr. Ricardo Fernández, its president, who  
8 would like to say a word or two before we begin.

9           MR. FERNÁNDEZ: Good evening, ladies and  
10 gentlemen, and members of the panel. It's my  
11 pleasure to welcome you here to Lehman College,  
12 to the Lovinger Theater, for this session.  
13 Lehman is a public institution and we welcome the  
14 use of our facilities by the community for this  
15 and many other purposes.

16           The public is always welcome here. We want  
17 to be an institution that serves the many needs  
18 OF our community and in this borough. So, all  
19 the best in your deliberations this evening.  
20 And, again, welcome to Lehman College. This is  
21 your home.

22           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Ricardo. We  
23 have this facility for a limited time, this  
24 beautiful facility this evening, and I want to  
25 make sure that we hear from everyone who is

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1 signed up. For those of you who did not sign up  
2 and wish to speak, please see one of the  
3 Districting Commission staff to register.

4 Jonathan Ettricks is around. He has an ID  
5 around his neck. He can sign you up, or Shirley  
6 Limongi or Brian Flynn. They will make  
7 themselves known to you. You will see them  
8 around the facility. Additionally, if you  
9 require translation of your statement, please let  
10 staff at the registration desk know. They will  
11 ensure that a translator will be provided when it  
12 is your turn to speak.

13 Before we begin to take testimony, I would  
14 like to make a few opening comments. At the  
15 beginning of August, the Commission advertised in  
16 community and ethnic newspapers, announcing the  
17 Commission's public hearing schedule. An e-mail  
18 blast was sent effectively to over 50,000  
19 interested individuals and organizations.

20 Various advocacy groups helped spread the  
21 word through their individual networks, and the  
22 hearing schedule was publicized on our Facebook  
23 page and Twitter feeds. From the look of this  
24 room, we have more work to do, although it seems  
25 like we have reached many of you. As we go

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1 forward in this process, we will seek other,  
2 additional ways to maximize community  
3 participation.

4 Tonight, we conclude the first phase of New  
5 York City's districting process, as laid out in  
6 the New York City Charter. After the Commission  
7 holds public hearings in each of the five  
8 boroughs, the Commission will meet again,  
9 tomorrow at 1:00 P.M., at the Council Chambers in  
10 City Hall, to discuss what we have learned  
11 through this public hearing process.

12 At tomorrow's meeting, we will direct staff  
13 to create a preliminary districting plan,  
14 according to instructions. On September 4th, at  
15 1:00 P.M., at the City Council Chambers in City  
16 Hall, the Commission will meet again, this time  
17 to review and adopt the preliminary district plan  
18 that will then be made visible for public  
19 inspection and comment.

20 Please note that these meetings will be open  
21 to the public, but there will not be any  
22 opportunity for the public to speak or comment at  
23 that time. The public will have an opportunity  
24 to comment on this preliminary district plan  
25 during the second round of public hearings held

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1 throughout the five boroughs, beginning at  
2 5:00 P.M. on October 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 10th, and  
3 11th. We are still trying to determine the  
4 locations for those meetings, but they will be  
5 different from the ones previously used in order  
6 to maximize opportunities for community  
7 participation.

8 Comments from this round of public hearings  
9 will then be considered during a stated  
10 Commission meeting scheduled for October 18th,  
11 where the staff will once again be directed to  
12 revise the preliminary district plan in response  
13 to the comments that we received.

14 At the next stated Commission meeting on  
15 October 30th, the revised plan will be presented,  
16 considered, and adopted by the Commission. By  
17 November 5th, this revised plan will then be  
18 delivered to the City Council for its inspection  
19 and approval.

20 According to the City Charter, by  
21 November 27th, the Council must either adopt the  
22 revised district plan, at which point the plan  
23 will be filed with the City Clerk, or the Council  
24 can object to the revised district plan, in which  
25 case, the plan will be returned to the Commission

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1 with the Council's comments and objections.

2 The Commission will then have until  
3 January 5, 2013, to create another revised plan.  
4 This will then set the stage for a new set of  
5 public hearings, which have been tentatively  
6 scheduled from January 28th to February 8th in  
7 each of the five boroughs.

8 Again, we aim to have these hearings in  
9 different locations from the prior two rounds of  
10 public hearings in order to maximize  
11 opportunities for your participation. The  
12 Commission will then have until March 5th to  
13 create, adopt, and submit a final plan to the  
14 City Clerk and to the U.S. Department of Justice  
15 for Voting Rights Act Section V pre-clearance.

16 This process is described in a flow chart  
17 that is available for you tonight. Another  
18 handout that is available are two maps, one map  
19 of the five boroughs with the current City  
20 Council district lines, and another map of the  
21 Bronx with the borough's current City Council  
22 district line. Both maps include the total  
23 population within the districts.

24 The population figures reflected in the  
25 handouts have already been adjusted to reflect

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1 prisoners serving State sentences, but having  
2 residents within the respective Council districts  
3 as of the time of the taking of the U.S. Census  
4 in 2010. The Commission will take these figures  
5 into consideration when drawing the district  
6 clients.

7 It's also important to keep in mind as we  
8 conduct public hearings that we are not writing  
9 on a blank slate, but are operating within an  
10 established legal framework. We are legally  
11 required to consider, during the districting  
12 processes, the following. The total population  
13 difference of any district cannot be greater than  
14 10 percent of the average population for all  
15 districts.

16 District lines should ensure fair and  
17 effective representation of racial and language  
18 minority groups in New York City. The lines  
19 should keep neighborhoods and communities with  
20 established ties of common interest and  
21 association intact. Districts should be intact  
22 and contiguous. Districts should not cross  
23 borough boundaries, if at all possible, and  
24 districts should avoid diminishing the effective  
25 representation of voters.

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1 I want to bring to your attention our  
2 website, at [www.nyc.gov/districting](http://www.nyc.gov/districting). The site is  
3 the central repository of all documents and  
4 videos related to the Districting Commission. It  
5 also contains a complete schedule of our public  
6 hearings and a portal where you can pre-register  
7 for all hearings and be added to our mailing  
8 list. I hope you will all visit the site and let  
9 us know how it can be made more informative and  
10 interactive.

11 One final note. We have a number of  
12 speakers tonight. Each of you has three minutes,  
13 which is really not very long. Keep in mind,  
14 however, that we already have a substantial  
15 amount of data from the U.S. Census and  
16 elsewhere. We also welcome, and will carefully  
17 read, any written submission given to us.

18 All of this data is important to our  
19 decision, but your testimony at these hearings is  
20 especially critical. In your remarks, tell us  
21 about your neighborhoods. Where are its natural  
22 boundaries, as you see them? So that we can  
23 follow your comments, please tell us what Council  
24 district you are concerned about, and how, if at  
25 all, you would like to see it changed.

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1           Thank you again for participating in this  
2           important event. At this point, I would like to  
3           have the commissioners, beginning on my left,  
4           introduce themselves, and then we will hear from  
5           our first witness.

6           MR. PADAVAN: Good evening. I am Frank  
7           Padavan from Queens County.

8           MS. BRAGG: Hi, I am Jamila Ponton Bragg  
9           from Manhattan.

10          MS PERSAUD: Good evening, Roxanne Persaud,  
11          Brooklyn.

12          MS. PROVENZANO: Hi, I am Madeline  
13          Provenzano from the Bronx.

14          MR. ROBERT: I am John Robert from the  
15          Bronx.

16          MR. YU: Justin Yu from Manhattan.

17          MR. HACKWORTH: Thaddeus Hackworth, staff to  
18          the Commission.

19          CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I neglected to mention  
20          that I am from the Bronx as well.

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

22          MS. LIN: Linda Lin from Queens.

23          MS. WOLFE: Gloria Wolfe, Manhattan.

24          MR. ODOM: Oscar Odom III, Brooklyn.

25          MS. HANKS: Kamillah Hanks, Staten Island.

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1 MR. CERULLO: Scott Cerullo, Staten Island.

2 MR. HART: Rob Hart, Staten Island.

3 MR. HACKWORTH: Our first speaker tonight  
4 will be Zellnor Myrie, to be followed by William  
5 Stanford, Jr.

6 MR. MYRIE: Good afternoon, and thank you  
7 for the opportunity to testify today. My name is  
8 Zellnor Myrie and I am a current Bronx resident,  
9 urban studies graduate student and former New  
10 York City Council aide. In the coming months,  
11 many qualified citizens and policymakers will  
12 offer detailed suggestions to the Commission that  
13 will help advance the tenets of democratic  
14 representation in New York City, while  
15 underscoring the ideals of the Voting Rights Act.

16 Today, I simply want to direct the  
17 Commission's attention to some of the legislative  
18 implications of the districting process to stress  
19 the importance of a thorough and comprehensive  
20 process that gives communities of color a voice  
21 in government. The expansion of the City Council  
22 from 35 members to 51 came on the heels of the  
23 Supreme Court decision exhorting our city to  
24 increase representation in communities of color.

25 Representation for representation's sake, of

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1 course, was never the goal. And, as such, it is  
2 important that we measure the impact that  
3 increased minority representation has had on the  
4 City Council. My graduate research on Council  
5 legislation enacted over the past 15 years  
6 suggests that representation hasn't just been  
7 nominal, but that black, Hispanic, and Asian  
8 members have incrementally increased their impact  
9 on City policy.

10 Consider the following. From 1998 to 2000,  
11 only 8 percent of past legislation was sponsored  
12 by a black, Asian, or Hispanic member. From 2001  
13 to 2003, however, that number jumped to  
14 20 percent. 2004 to 2006 saw an increase to  
15 27 percent, while that number climbed to  
16 31 percent from 2007 to 2009.

17 During this current session, January of 2010  
18 through June of this year, we are on pace to have  
19 36 percent of Council legislation sponsored by a  
20 minority member. And this increase isn't just in  
21 overall policies; legislation that has had  
22 particular impact on communities of color, like  
23 foreclosure prevention, immigrant assistance  
24 programs, and enforcement mechanisms aimed at  
25 repairing housing has also increased.

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1           Seven such bills were passed in the 1998 to  
2           2000 session, while our current cycle has already  
3           won 37 such bills enacted. While these passage  
4           rates still have room for improvement, given the  
5           corresponding population numbers of people of  
6           color in our city, it is clear there is a  
7           connection between minority representation and  
8           policy enactment on the Council.

9           Districting that continues to encourage such  
10          representation not only helps engage  
11          Constitutionally-protected communities in this  
12          process, but helps increase policy outcomes for  
13          them as well. In addition to these implications,  
14          I would also like to ask the Commission to keep  
15          our city's growing young population in mind as  
16          they render their districting decisions.

17          Our city gained over 300,000 people between  
18          the ages of 25 and 34 over the past decade. And  
19          here in our borough, we boast the highest  
20          percentage of persons under the age of 18 in the  
21          entire City, at 26 percent (timer dings). Thank  
22          you again for the opportunity to testify, and  
23          your time and attention to these matters.

24                   CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Mr. Myrie, do you have  
25                   that testimony in a form that you could share

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1 with us in writing?

2 MR. MYRIE: Sure, I gave it.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You did?

4 MR. MYRIE: Yes, I did.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Very good. Thank you.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
7 William Stanford, Jr., to be followed by Anthony  
8 Riveccio.

9 MR. STANFORD: You made several mistakes  
10 between last Monday and today. It's possible you  
11 have a small attendance here today because Robert  
12 Jackson decided to hold a similar forum regarding  
13 what was going on in his City Council district.

14 Okay. You made several mistakes. We were  
15 in Queens; we couldn't enter the auditorium  
16 before 5:00, okay? Now we are here in the Bronx.  
17 We couldn't enter this auditorium before 5:00.  
18 You shouldn't call yourself the New York City  
19 Districting Commission. You should call yourself  
20 Saturday Night Live part-time players.

21 You say you start a forum at 5:00 and then  
22 detain us and say, "We are still organizing."  
23 You should have finished organizing before 5:00.  
24 Bad planning on your part doesn't constitute an  
25 emergency on our part. As I said before, that's

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1 why I said you should start these public forums  
2 at 7:00, not 5:00. Because as I said before,  
3 some people are still working 9:00 to 5:00. But  
4 did you listen? No.

5 (Unintelligible). MTA, LATFOR, and the  
6 (unintelligible), four groups that don't know  
7 what they are doing; one in the north, one in the  
8 south, one in the east, one in the west. You  
9 could decide which spot you want, okay?

10 This forum started over 30 minutes late.  
11 Some of you were over ten minutes late. Are you  
12 serious? And then we had these people over here  
13 in Queens Library. Oh, they opened the door for  
14 us. They said, "You have to wait because we are  
15 still organizing."

16 So my question for you, them, and the Queens  
17 Library employees was the same question I asked  
18 the LATFOR representation, "Are you confused?  
19 Are you stupid or are you mentally retarded?"  
20 It's like, this is false advertising. You say  
21 you started at 5:00, you started when? Whenever  
22 the hell you get around to it? Are you serious?

23 You shouldn't even bother holding these  
24 public forums if you are going to do it that way.  
25 You know, I find that that's very insulting. And

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1 this is embarrassing. You said you were holding  
2 this forum here in the Music Building, in the  
3 East Dining Room. This is Lovinger Theater.  
4 What happened to the East Dining Room? Was it  
5 contaminated? (Laughter.)

6 You didn't even tell us before time you were  
7 changing the room. There is no excuse for that.  
8 You are supposed to tell us what's happening  
9 before time, not after. Now, hopefully, during  
10 rounds two and three, you will clean up. You get  
11 your act together. I hope you get your act  
12 together because, as I said before -- maybe I  
13 didn't say this to you before -- you need to get  
14 it together or throw in the towel and go home and  
15 quit stalling (unintelligible) over 20 years ago.

16 This is getting ridiculous. If I can make  
17 it to these sites early -- (timer dings) -- why  
18 can't you do the same? Again, what is with the  
19 zigzagging? What is with the zigzagging  
20 district? Are you using those zigzagging  
21 scissors?

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

23 MR. STANFORD: Go across the lines. Go by  
24 the bus corridors.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

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1 MR. STANFORD: Thank you.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
3 Anthony Riveccio, followed by Bernel-Arthur  
4 Richardson.

5 MR. RIVIECCIO: Good afternoon. I promise I  
6 won't get that dramatic. Since I only have a few  
7 minutes, let me just get right to the point and  
8 be very procedural, if I may. My name is Anthony  
9 Riveccio, and I am a resident in the 11th  
10 Council District, a business owner as well as  
11 local president of a local club called Northwest  
12 Bronx Democrats.

13 Our community district, we live in Community  
14 District 7. Community District 7, I mentioned it  
15 as a community board. Of course, we know it as a  
16 community district. In our community district,  
17 and I could actually be wrong, we have at least  
18 three City Council people in that district.  
19 Actually, I think it's four.

20 But, nevertheless, what I would like to see  
21 in a perfect world is maybe one or two  
22 representatives per community district. I guess  
23 in a perfect world, of course, I would like to  
24 see one. If I look at this map, and I am just  
25 now pulling this out of my head, I would say that

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1 the 11th Councilman District where I live at is  
2 currently majority by Riverdale.

3 So, if we followed my analogy, then the 11th  
4 Councilman District would no longer be in  
5 Community District 7. It would be where it is  
6 now, Community District 8. And the councilperson  
7 of Community Council 11 would, of course,  
8 represent Community District 8.

9 So, who would represent Community  
10 District 7? Well, the only other councilpeople  
11 that hold a plurality in that district would be  
12 the 14th and the 15th Council Districts, the  
13 Council areas of Councilmen Fernando Cabrera and  
14 Joel Rivera.

15 So, again, in a perfect world, I would like  
16 to see the merger, or at least one of those other  
17 Council districts, cover the bulk of Community  
18 District 7 itself. I think, especially after  
19 what has happened in the local, State and  
20 congressional redistricting, I can't emphasize to  
21 you enough that areas such as Bedford Park,  
22 Norwood, and Kingsbridge not just need to be  
23 united, which they are not now, but they need to  
24 be united under one, community district as well  
25 as Council district. Thank you.

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1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Rivieccio.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
3 Bernel-Arthur Richardson, to be followed by  
4 Robert Press.

5 MR. RICHARDSON: Good evening. My name is  
6 Bernel-Arthur Richardson, and I am the executive  
7 director of Black United Leadership of the Bronx,  
8 better known as BULB. I am here tonight to speak  
9 pertaining to one particular district. And I am  
10 addressing the district, the current district,  
11 the 16th Council District.

12 In your opening remarks, you spoke about the  
13 need to maintain communities of common interest.  
14 The 16th District represents one of only two  
15 African-American districts in the entire county  
16 of the Bronx, one of only two. And yet, we are  
17 hearing that the possibility exists that that  
18 district will be designated, taking out some of  
19 the African-American communities and placing them  
20 somewhere else.

21 Now, we don't know if that's a fact. But my  
22 job tonight is to say to the Commission that it  
23 is in our interest, the African-American  
24 community, to maintain that district. We only  
25 have one other than us, and that is up in the

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1 northeast. So, if it does not happen that we can  
2 have an African-American district, we will only  
3 end up with one, and from Gun Hill Road to the  
4 rest of the Bronx, there will be no  
5 African-American representation in the City  
6 Council.

7 That, ladies and gentlemen, would be a  
8 tragic event. It's a travesty that for all this  
9 time we have struggled to maintain that district.  
10 We have worked hard to maintain that district,  
11 and now we are concerned that that may not occur.  
12 So, my job tonight is to appeal to you as you  
13 consider drawing the lines.

14 Bear in mind that the Voting Rights Act  
15 specifically refers to communities of interest  
16 based on color, ethnicity, religion, and other  
17 cultural facts. Well, we combine all of that.  
18 We are prepared. My organization will be  
19 submitting to the Commission our version of a map  
20 for you to consider.

21 We hope that in the coming weeks, in the  
22 coming months, as the Commission continues, that  
23 our concerns will be considered, our issues will  
24 be addressed, and we look forward to working with  
25 the Commission. Thank you.

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1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Richardson.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be  
3 Robert Press, to be followed by John Moncreef.

4 MR. PRESS: Thank you. My name is Robert  
5 Press. Since there are so many people on line  
6 that want to speak to you after me, I will be  
7 brief. This year, New York State went through  
8 redistricting at the Federal and State level.

9 The State Senate and State Assembly are the  
10 ones who do this redistricting at all levels  
11 above here. They could not come together on  
12 congressional lines, and a federal judge had to  
13 do it. The State Senate, when they did their  
14 redistricting, did not help the public, but they  
15 helped themselves by creating a 63rd State Senate  
16 district or an extra State Senate district that  
17 they felt would be an extra Republican district.

18 The Bronx has grown significantly as,  
19 according to your statistics, by over 75,000  
20 people, which would mean the Bronx would need  
21 another half of a Council district. I see that  
22 you are an independent redistricting committee,  
23 and hope that you will be impartial, as I know a  
24 few of you members.

25 But there are people in the Bronx who, after

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1 the redistricting by the State and Federal level  
2 have a new congressman, a new State senator and a  
3 new Assembly member. I hope next year they won't  
4 have a new City Council member, too. That would  
5 mean four different officials, and none of them  
6 were voted out. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Press.

8 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is John  
9 Moncreef, to be followed by Richard Vitacco.

10 MR. MONCREEF: Good evening, panel. Thank  
11 you for having my presence here. I come on  
12 behalf of Assembly Member Eric Stevenson. I have  
13 a statement that he would like me to make to the  
14 panel. He wants the statement to go on record.

15 He hopes that the 16th Council District  
16 "remains the same or, if any changes are made,  
17 they should be made in a way in which African  
18 Americans are not disenfranchised. Many  
19 African-American neighborhoods are being proposed  
20 to be cut out of the district, which is  
21 discriminatory and should be unaccepted."

22 Assemblyman Stevenson's office. Thank you  
23 again.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Moncreef.

25 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Richard

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1 Vitacco, followed by Marie Descorbeth. Richard  
2 Vitacco?

3 (Silence.)

4 Marie Descorbeth?

5 MS. DESCORBETH: Good afternoon to all of  
6 you on the panel. My name is Marie Descorbeth  
7 and I live in the 46th District in Brooklyn. I  
8 want to say a special hello to Ms. Roxanne. And  
9 I have been in the community since 1998.  
10 Concerning the redistricting for our community,  
11 it's to our concern that it will be an imperative  
12 to keep the district together.

13 We don't want to implement any change that  
14 will divide our community. As well, I want to  
15 keep our traditional service together. We don't  
16 want so many people to increase it, our  
17 community. We want to keep the community  
18 together.

19 We want to keep the diversity as it used to  
20 be by communicating in the area, the zoning from  
21 East 108th, by Seaview Avenue and also by  
22 Canarsie Flatlands. We want to keep that  
23 together. We want to keep only one Council  
24 district leadership.

25 And we want to keep our business partners.

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1 We want our communication service to keep going.  
2 We want to keep our diversity as it used to be in  
3 the past. It is a pleasure -- it is a privilege  
4 for me to be here tonight, as I didn't have the  
5 time -- have a chance to testify at the Queens  
6 community public hearing, and wasn't able to.  
7 Thank you for the information.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Ms. Descorbeth.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Our last registered speaker  
10 is Ms. Rachel Cyprien.

11 MS. CYPRIEN: Good evening. I also want to  
12 thank all of you, the panel, and everyone here,  
13 and a special thanks to Roxanne, who represents  
14 my district, District 46. And, like Marie, I  
15 didn't have a chance to attend the hearing in  
16 Queens, so I am here tonight.

17 And my main concern is that our district not  
18 be chopped up. We need to keep as limited  
19 individuals representing the community as  
20 possible because too many people representing a  
21 community causes division. Everyone has  
22 different ideas. When we have an issue, we don't  
23 know who to go to.

24 And there is a huge Haitian population in  
25 Canarsie and we need a representative, a Haitian

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1 representative, so that people who speak Creole  
2 have someone that they can go to if their English  
3 is not as strong as mine.

4 And, again, that is my main concern, that  
5 the district is being chopped up into too many  
6 people representing one district. So that's a  
7 big concern. And Canarsie doesn't have a long  
8 train line. It's the L train. So, again, we  
9 need to have one person representing the  
10 community and stop dividing the community up.  
11 That's my concern, and I hope it will be  
12 addressed. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Ben, thank you.  
14 Ms. Cyprien.

15 MR. HACKWORTH: We will call, again, Richard  
16 Vitacco.

17 (Silence.)

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We have run through all of  
19 the speakers who pre-registered or registered at  
20 the desk. Is there anyone else who would like to  
21 address the Commission? If they would, just  
22 indicate that they would, and if they could just  
23 provide our staff person with your name so we can  
24 have a record for our purposes.

25 MS. SIMMONS-OLIVER (from audience): Can a

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1 staff person please raise their hand?

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Right there.

3 MS. SIMMONS-OLIVER: Thank you to the  
4 Commission for the opportunity. For those in the  
5 audience, my name is Cheryl Simmons-Oliver. I am  
6 a resident of the 12th Council District. At this  
7 time, I am going to speak to the 16th. I am also  
8 a member of the Black United Leadership of the  
9 Bronx.

10 The 16th Council District is the historical  
11 African-American district within Bronx County.  
12 And though we recognize the growth and the  
13 various ethnicities that have relocated to our  
14 borough, it is extremely important that the  
15 interests of the African-American community  
16 within Bronx County be preserved.

17 It would be a disservice to all of those who  
18 have struggled over the course of many years to  
19 establish an identity within this borough for  
20 this 16th District to be eradicated, broken up,  
21 and divided in a way that we no longer exist.  
22 And that's what we are talking about here. We  
23 would be relegated to simply having one intact  
24 Council District within the Bronx that would be  
25 fully African American.

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1           And, though I don't want you to feel that we  
2           would like to exclude anyone else, I think the  
3           preservation of our identity is extremely  
4           important for the children in this community, the  
5           families that are relocating to this community,  
6           and those who have been in the forefront of  
7           establishing the Civil Rights and the Voters  
8           Rights Act, which has made it possible for many  
9           of you who sit at this table to be here today. I  
10          thank you so very much.

11           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Ma'am, I have a question  
12          before you leave. What neighborhoods do you view  
13          as encompassed within the area you just  
14          described?

15           MS. SIMMONS-OLIVER: The 16th. That would  
16          be Morrisania. That's Morrisania. That's the  
17          Claremont area. That is the Forest area.

18           VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Hyde Bridge.

19           MS. SIMMONS-OLIVER: Hyde Bridge.

20           VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: Concourse Village.

21           MS. SIMMONS-OLIVER: Concourse Village.

22           CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you very much.

23          That's helpful.

24           MS. SIMMONS-OLIVER: You are very welcome.

25           MR. HACKWORTH: We have an additional

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1 speaker, Emmanuel Findlay, Jr.

2 MR. FINDLAY: Good afternoon. Good evening.  
3 What I want to speak on was to make sure that  
4 these lines also included the up-and-coming  
5 demographics of the African-Americans, the  
6 immigrants that are coming in. We also want to  
7 make sure they are taken into account, because  
8 these are areas where we are growing, areas where  
9 we are starting to make an intact in the  
10 community. We want to make sure that we are also  
11 taken into account, not just us as the  
12 African-Americans that are already here. We want  
13 to make sure that when you guys are drawing these  
14 lines, you will take into account that we also  
15 live in these areas and we also want to be  
16 represented.

17 MR. ODOM: Any particular Council District  
18 you are talking about?

19 MR. FINDLAY: The 16th.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Findlay.  
21 Is there anyone else who would like to address  
22 the Commission at this time? Yes, sir.

23 MR. REYES: Good evening. My name is Lennin  
24 Reyes. I am a journalism student here at Lehman.  
25 I live in the 16th Council District, but I am

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1 here to discuss an area in the northeast Bronx  
2 that has been hit hard by the redistricting, and  
3 that's the vicinity of the Park Side Housing  
4 Projects.

5 While its surrounding community is in the  
6 13th Council District, Park Side is stuck in the  
7 11th Council District, which is based around  
8 Riverdale.

9 VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: "Stuck"?

10 MR. REYES: And Park Side, the disparity --  
11 and this redistricting affected the ability for  
12 Park Side to obtain big funding for security  
13 cameras, which was evident when Councilman James  
14 Vacca got the money to install security cameras  
15 in the Pelham Parkway and Throgs Neck Housing  
16 Projects, which are in the 13th, yet Park Side  
17 didn't receive any.

18 So, if possible, it would be appropriate to  
19 place -- if Park Side Housing Projects, which are  
20 over by B, and R, now, Avenues, by Bronx Park  
21 East, in the 13th Council District. Thank you  
22 very much.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Mr. Reyes.  
24 Again, is there anyone else who would like to  
25 address the Commission at this time? We are

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1 going to recess for 15 minutes to let anyone else  
2 who is on their way arrive and get settled and  
3 sign up. We will reconvene in 15 minutes and see  
4 where we are. Thank you very much. We are  
5 recessed.

6 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Excuse me, may I have your  
8 attention. If there anyone else who wishes to  
9 speak to the Commission at this time, if they  
10 would just indicate by raising their hands, and  
11 they can be recognized.

12 (Silence.)

13 We have invited up every speaker who  
14 pre-registered or registered this evening to  
15 address the Commission. There appears to be no  
16 one else who wants to address the Commission. We  
17 will adjourn until tomorrow at 1:00 P.M.

18 (Continued on the next page.)

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1           The staff will remain behind in the event  
2           that someone comes later, and will receive their  
3           written statement and their name, and we will try  
4           to arrange to have them appear at another  
5           hearing. We stand adjourned until tomorrow at  
6           1:00 P.M. Thank you.

7           (Whereupon, at 6:34 p.m., the above matter  
8           was concluded.)

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



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JOSHUA B. EDWARDS, RPR

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