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CITY OF NEW YORK
2012-2013
DISTRICTING COMMISSION
SECOND ROUND PUBLIC MEETING
Medgar Evers College
Founder's Auditorium
1650 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11225
October 11, 2012. 5:48 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE:

- BENITO ROMANO, Chairperson
- THADDEUS HACKWORTH, General Counsel
- CARL HUM - Executive Director
- OSCAR ODOM III (R-KINGS)
- GLORIA CARVAJAL WOLFE (R-NEW YORK)
- JUSTIN YU (D-NEW YORK)
- FRANK PADAVAN (R-QUEENS)
- SCOTT CERULLO (R-RICHMOND)
- JAMILA PONTON BRAGG (D-NEW YORK)
- JOHN ROBERT (D-BRONX)
- THOMAS OGNIBENE (R-QUEENS)

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Good evening. Thank you
2 for coming tonight and welcome to the second
3 round of the New York City Districting
4 Commission's public hearing. My name is Benito
5 Romano and I am the Chair of the New York City
6 Districting Commission. And on behalf of the
7 Commission, I want to thank you Dr. William
8 Pollard, the president of the college, for
9 hosting us tonight.

10 We have the facilities only for a few hours
11 and I want to make sure that we hear from anyone
12 who was signed up. And for those of you who did
13 not sign up, who wish to speak, please see the
14 staff registration desk outside of this room. If
15 you require a translator for your testimony,
16 please let the staff at the registration desk
17 know, they will ensure that a translator will be
18 provided when it's your turn to testify.

19 Before we take testimony, I would like to
20 make a few observations. At the beginning of
21 this month, the Commission advertised in
22 community and ethnic newspapers announcing the
23 Commission's public hearing schedule. An e-mail
24 blast was sent to over 5,500 individuals and
25 organizations. Various advocacy groups helped

1 spread the word through their individual networks
2 and the hearing schedule was publicized on our
3 Facebook page and Twitter feed. We will continue
4 to find other ways to maximize community
5 participation and interest.

6 Tonight represents the second round of
7 public hearings that the Commission will conduct
8 throughout the City. Over 450 people attended
9 our first round of hearings in late August and
10 the Commission heard from more than 131
11 individuals.

12 Since then, the Commission has released a
13 preliminary draft Council district plan on
14 September 4th that adjusted the current Council
15 lines for populations proportionality, because in
16 the last ten years, many Council districts have
17 either increased or decreased in populations,
18 creating a significant deviations from the ideal
19 Council district population of 160,710. The
20 preliminary draft plan was also posted on the
21 Commission's Web site, www.nyc.gov/districting;
22 it was displayed in public areas, such as
23 Brooklyn Borough Hall, the Queens Library and the
24 District Commission office in lower Manhattan,
25 and links to other Web sites, such as The New

1 York Public Library.

2 On the same day, the Commission also
3 launched an online mapping tool to allow the
4 public to draw Council district maps for the
5 Commission's consideration. The Commission staff
6 also opened the resource room at the Commission's
7 office in lower Manhattan. The resource room is
8 available for those without access to computer
9 terminals who wish to draw and submit maps to the
10 Commission or for those wishing to receive
11 one-on-one assistance with map drawing, as the
12 resource room is staffed by Justin Bassett, our
13 mapping associate. The room is by appointment
14 only, but it's open well past normal business
15 hours. The Commission has received a few maps so
16 far, and we encourage you to explore the mapping
17 tool available on our Web site. You will also be
18 able to see some of the maps submitted by the
19 public.

20 Finally, the Commission has also launched
21 the Speakers' Bureau, where an organization or a
22 group can request a staff member to talk about
23 the decennial districting process. So far, the
24 Speakers' Bureau has addressed a number of civic
25 organizations, community boards and even a

1 grade-school class. If there is anyone wishing
2 to have the Speakers' Bureau address their group
3 or organization, please see Jonathan Ettricks or
4 Carlos Carino to set up an appointment.

5 The Commission is eager to hear tonight's
6 testimony and comments on the preliminary draft
7 plan. After today's hearing, and the others in
8 the second round of hearings, the Commission will
9 consider the comments during its next scheduled
10 public meeting, on October 18th. At that
11 meeting, the Commission will direct the staff to
12 revise the preliminary district plan in response
13 to the comments received during this second
14 round. Then, at the Commission's public meetings
15 on October 30th, a revised plan, reflecting the
16 comments received, will be presented and the
17 Commission will decide whether to adopt the plan.
18 If the Commission adopts the plan, it will then
19 be delivered to the City Council for its
20 inspection and approval by November 5th.

21 According to the City Charter, by
22 November 26th, the City Council must either adopt
23 the revised district plan, at which point, the
24 plan will then be filed with the City Clerk, or
25 the Council can object to the revised district

1 plan, at which, point the plan will be returned
2 to the Commission, with the Council's comments
3 and concerns. If the Council takes neither
4 action, it will be deemed adopted.

5 If the Council objects to the revised
6 district plan, the Commission will then have
7 until January 5, 2013 to create a revised plan.
8 This will then trigger a new set of public
9 hearings to receive comment and feedback on the
10 revised plan.

11 The Commission will then have until
12 March 5th to create, adopt and submit a final
13 plan for the City Clerk and to U.S. Department of
14 Justice for preclearance under the Voting Rights
15 Act.

16 This process is described in a flow chart
17 that is available for you tonight, as it was
18 during first round of hearings. Other handouts
19 include a copy of the preliminary draft plan map,
20 an enlarged map of Brooklyn with the preliminary
21 draft lines and a listing of public participation
22 tools that are available.

23 As before, it's again worth noting that
24 there are certain factors the law obligates the
25 Commission to consider during the districting

1 process; these include that the difference in
2 population between the least populous and the
3 most populous district shall not exceed 10
4 percent of the average population for all
5 districts; districts must fairly and effectively
6 represent the racial and language minority groups
7 in New York City; districts must keep
8 neighborhoods and communities with established
9 ties of common interest and association intact;
10 districts must be compact and they must be
11 contiguous; at all cost, we must keep districts
12 within the borough and we must avoid diminishing
13 the effective representation of voters.

14 I want to also bring to your attention our
15 Web site at www.nyc.gov/districting. This site
16 is the central repository of all documents and
17 videos relating to the districting Commission.
18 It also contains a complete schedule of our
19 public hearings, all documents and maps submitted
20 to the Commission, our online mapping tool, and a
21 portal, where you can preregister for all
22 hearings and be added to our mailing list. I
23 hope you will all visit the site and let us know
24 how it can be made more informative and
25 interactive.

1 One final note, we have a number of speakers
2 tonight, each of you has three minutes, which is
3 not very long, but keep in mind, we have
4 assembled a substantial amount of data from the
5 U.S. Census and elsewhere. We also will take
6 written submissions you wish to offer. The data
7 we have will be important to our decision, but
8 these hearings provide critical input. Tell us
9 about your neighborhoods, where are the natural
10 boundaries as you see them.

11 Now, that concludes my remarks. At this
12 time, I would like to have the commissioners
13 introduce themselves and then we will hear from
14 our first witness, start on my left.

15 MR. ROBERT: Thank you.

16 John Robert, from the Bronx.

17 MR. ODOM: Oscar Odom, III, Brooklyn.

18 MR. YU: Justin Yu, from Manhattan.

19 MS. BRAGG: Jamila Ponton Bragg, Manhattan.

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

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Benito Romano, from
22 Manhattan.

23 MR. HACKWORTH: Thaddeus Hackworth, staff to
24 the Commission.

25 MR. OGNIBENE: Thomas Ognibene, Queens

1 County.

2 MS. WOLFE: Gloria Carvajal Wolfe,
3 Manhattan.

4 MR. CERULLO: Scott Cerullo, Staten Island.

5 MR. PADAVAN: Frank Padavan, Queens.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: Before I call the first
7 speaker tonight, I will explain the ground rules
8 for giving testimony tonight.

9 Every speaker has three minutes to testify.
10 When your three minutes have expired, you will
11 hear a chime; at that point, please finish your
12 sentence and yield the microphone to the next
13 speaker. Because the Commission only has the use
14 of these facilities until 9 o'clock taking more
15 than your three minutes of time may result in
16 your neighbor or fellow community member not
17 being able to speak at all. Please keep that in
18 mind and be respectful of others wishing to
19 testify.

20 If you would like to provide more detailed
21 testimony to the Commission, you are encouraged
22 to submit your written testimony by providing a
23 copy at the registration desk or by e-mailing it
24 to hearings@districting.nyc.gov or by mailing it
25 to the Commission's office.

1 I will first call those who have
2 preregistered to speak, followed by those who
3 have registered today at the desk. I will
4 announce the next speaker, as well as the
5 following speaker.

6 When you hear your name called, please
7 approach the nearest microphone, so you can be
8 ready to give your testimony when your name is
9 called.

10 If you have any questions, please ask our
11 staff members at the registration desk.

12 I will now call our first speaker, Council
13 Member Charles Barron.

14 MR. BARRON: Thank you very much. My
15 concern around redistricting is the same concern
16 I had when the Congressional lines were drawn.
17 We find ourselves, black people, I am very
18 concerned about black and Latino people and our
19 empowerment, and the Congressional lines, when
20 they were drawn, the percentages of black voters
21 were getting closer and closer to the 51 percent
22 mark, which is by law, by some of the districts
23 designated as that, and what that leaves open to
24 happen is often our districts, we lose power if
25 we lose black population. So in the

1 Congressional district, we fought to try to get
2 people to understand the importance of our
3 inclusion in these bodies, these assembly bodies
4 and council bodices. For this Council district,
5 I am concerned about the 46th District in
6 Canarsie. Now, they are breaking up Canarsie in
7 some instances into two and three communities,
8 and there is no longer one contiguous community
9 that can have the inclusion of those who have
10 been excluded. And I am also concerned that some
11 of the elected officials have influence over that
12 and they look at certain candidates and draw
13 their homes out of the district so that these
14 candidates won't have an opportunity to run.
15 That, we should not tolerate. We should make
16 sure that the plans that are drawn up, that are
17 therefore the best representation that we could
18 get to the inclusion of all of us who have
19 historically been locked of out of power.
20 Because this is about power, when you redraw
21 lines, it's about power, who will have the power
22 to make decisions in this city. So my district
23 does have some parts of Canarsie, and I think
24 that it should be given back to the 46th and that
25 we should look at Brownsville and East Flatbush

1 and other areas where my district, the 42nd
2 Council District, is where mine is predominantly
3 East New York. So I am concerned about that, I
4 am supporting the Mercedes Narcisse plan and the
5 Unity Plan that was presented to you that makes
6 the 46th Council District a district that gives
7 us a fair share and supports voters who may have
8 been locked out of the process or haven't had all
9 of the opportunities.

10 So I am hoping when you draw up these lines
11 that you look at the 46th, look at the 42nd and I
12 believe some of the neighboring districts around
13 there to make sure that it is not sliced up so
14 that the people of Canarsie will be disempowered
15 and located in other areas. This process is
16 supposed to be fair and it's supposed to be
17 empowering for those who have historically been
18 locked out. Thank you.

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be
20 Doreen McGill, to be followed by Council Member
21 Stephen Levin.

22 MS. MCGILL: Thank you for allowing me to
23 speak here tonight.

24 I request information for the dozens of
25 family day care providers who are being pushed

1 out of our jobs so that early (inaudible) can be
2 born on October 1st. We were not individually
3 informed about the ACS budget network
4 requirements and may be unemployed as small
5 business owners once our present babies start
6 preschool. Those of us who don't find jobs, may
7 find ourselves on Public Assistance for no
8 reasons given by the UFT.

9 A parent called me on Friday, frantic that
10 she could not enroll her son in my day care. I
11 have seen what happens when -- excuse me -- new
12 programs are born and I am tired of being starved
13 to make room for bullies and corrupters.

14 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will be
15 Council Member Stephen Levin, followed by Dr. Wah
16 Lee.

17 MR. LEVIN: Thank you very much to members
18 of the Commission for the opportunity to testify
19 before you today. My name is Stephen Levin. I
20 am currently City Council Member for the 33rd
21 District in Brooklyn, which includes the
22 neighborhoods of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, South
23 Williamsburg, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Vinegar Hill,
24 DUMBO, Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights,
25 Boerum Hill and Park Slope.

1 As you can see, the 33rd District is
2 remarkably diverse, both ethnically and
3 geographically, and I consider it an honor every
4 day to represent all of these neighborhoods in
5 Brooklyn.

6 First, I would like to thank the Commission
7 and all of the commissioners for diligence and
8 transparency that you have exhibited throughout
9 this process. It is a massive and extremely
10 complex endeavor to balance the various interests
11 that exist at times at odds with one another
12 within each of this 51 Council districts of New
13 York City, in each of the five boroughs and in
14 the city as a whole. I believe that you have so
15 far done so in a way that gives the public
16 confidence in the process and in the results.

17 With regard to the proposed lines of the
18 33rd District, the 33rd District and its
19 neighboring districts, I believe that these lines
20 reflect the population shifts that have occurred
21 in north Brooklyn over the last ten years. The
22 33rd District currently has a population of
23 roughly 171,000 people, which is well over the
24 target population of 160,000 for the Council
25 district; therefore, the geographical decreases

1 is inevitable, and the fact that this Commission
2 has proposed to reduce the district at the
3 southeastern edge in Park Slope makes logical
4 sense. Under the proposed lines, Park Slope
5 would be redrawn into the 39th District, which
6 would allow all of Park Slope to be represented
7 by a unified council district.

8 In addition, the Commission has proposed
9 including several additional election districts
10 into northern Bedford-Stuyvesant to the 33rd
11 District. For the last ten years, this area has
12 gone from being to mostly manufacturing and
13 industrial to significantly residential, as the
14 Orthodox Jewish population of Williamsburg, which
15 is currently almost entirely within the 33rd
16 District has moved south. This expansion makes
17 logical sense for two reasons; first, this would
18 allow the Orthodox Jewish community in north
19 Brooklyn to be within a unified council district;
20 secondly, this shift would allow for the 35th
21 Council District, which has seen a tremendous
22 increase in Caucasian population over the last
23 ten years to maintain its status as a
24 majority-minority district, something that I
25 believe is important for the diversity and the

1 Brooklyn Council delegation and the Council a
2 whole. There is one small area, however, which
3 has been shifted from the 33rd District to the
4 34th District, and that area is commonly referred
5 to as the Broadway Triangle, which consists of
6 the 78th and 79th Election Districts for the 53rd
7 Assembly District. This area which has been in
8 the 33rd District for the past ten years is the
9 site of a rezoning in the past from Council in
10 2009, which has been the source of litigation in
11 the intervening years. As council member and
12 before I was he elected to council, I spent a
13 tremendous amount of time working on this
14 rezoning, and it is my sincere hope that my
15 office will have the opportunity to continue to
16 address the needs for a rezoning of the Broadway
17 Triangle in the next term; therefore, I request
18 of the Commission that this area comprised of the
19 78th and the 79th ED's of the 53 Assemble
20 District be redrawn back into the 33rd Council
21 District.

22 Thank you very much for your time,
23 consideration service to the City of New York.
24 Thank you.

25 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Dr. Wah

1 Lee, to be followed by William Sanford, Jr.

2 DR. LEE: Good afternoon. My name is Dr.
3 Wah Lee. I have testified on behalf of OCA-New
4 York at the Commission's initial Brooklyn hearing
5 on August 11th and I will testify on behalf of
6 OCA-New York today.

7 With respect to City Council District 38,
8 OCA-New York appreciates that this Commission
9 recognizes the importance of keeping both sides
10 of Eighth Avenue together in Sunset Park and that
11 it has also incorporated the community of common
12 interests extending east towards Bensonhurst,
13 approximately between 60th and 71st Streets.

14 With respect to proposed City Council
15 District 47, we are very surprised that little of
16 its district boundaries have changed when
17 compared to the current map. Does the
18 districting Commission feel that population
19 demographics have not changed between 2000 and
20 2010? By proposing to keep District 47
21 essentially the same over ten years, is this
22 Commission suggesting that the Asian community of
23 common interest has not grown in Bensonhurst
24 between the census of 2000 and 2010.

25 OCA-New York will reiterate, the 2010 census

1 revealed the number of Asian Americans has
2 reached over a quarter million in Brooklyn,
3 having grown by 41 percent since 2000. 2010
4 census data showed Sunset Park as 35 percent
5 Asian and Bensonhurst as 37 percent Asian. How
6 and why is it that the Asian community of common
7 interest can be kept in tact in proposed District
8 38, Sunset Park, and be divided in proposed
9 District 47, Bensonhurst?

10 OCA-New York supports the Unity Map proposed
11 by accord which supports large Asian-American
12 communities of interest together in accordance
13 with the principles of redistricting. Western
14 and Eastern Bensonhurst should not be divided.
15 The core of the western part of Bensonhurst is
16 18th Avenue. This 18th Avenue commercial strip
17 caters to the Asians in its surrounding vicinity
18 westward, northward and eastward. On the 18
19 Avenue commercial strip, considerably beginning
20 at 86th Street and stretching northward to the
21 60's, there has been many changes to local
22 community centers, restaurants, groceries and
23 other storefronts within the past decade which
24 serves the particularly Asian community.

25 For example, the First Otis Church, in

1 Brooklyn, on 18th Avenue and 84th Street now
2 caters to Asian-language speakers. In addition,
3 there are two high schools in the western part of
4 Bensonhurst. New Utrecht High School is about
5 one-quarter Asian and Franklin D. Roosevelt High
6 School is over one-third Asian. This is not
7 counting the students from this neighborhood who
8 attend Brooklyn Tech, Stuyvesant or Bronx
9 Science. OCA-New York supports the currently
10 proposed City Council District 38 and does not
11 support the currently proposed City Council
12 District 47. The alternately proposed are the
13 district lines for 47 as drawn in the Unity Map.
14 Thank you.

15 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker William Sanford, Jr., to be
17 follow by Joan Gibbs.

18 MR. SANFORD: The name is Mr. X. And, that
19 is, I didn't appreciate that comment you made to
20 me yesterday. Okay? You told me I should focus
21 on my testimony, but you didn't tell the Chair,
22 a/k/a Mr. Potato Head, to (inaudible) me last
23 Tuesday, which I didn't appreciate. That is that
24 a double standard, I don't appreciate that. Why
25 would you come down on me like that?

1 (Recess taken to fix the microphone.)

2 MR. SANFORD: So, as I said, that is, I
3 didn't appreciate that comment that you made to
4 me yesterday. Okay? If you could tell me I need
5 to focus on my testimony, then you can tell the
6 Chair to accommodate me in future public
7 hearings, especially if I preregistered.

8 What I saw basically was a double standard,
9 a imbalance. I didn't appreciate that. I won't
10 say that was offensive, that comment you said was
11 offensive, but I will say it's disturbing, and I
12 didn't appreciate it. If I preregistered to
13 speak at a public hearing, I expect to be
14 accommodated before the ending time, whatever
15 time that may be. I don't expect you to leave me
16 hanging by a needle and thread, which is what you
17 did in borough last Tuesday. If you can't PWYP,
18 practice what you preach, why are you hear? You
19 don't need to be here. You shouldn't be here.

20 MR. HACKWORTH: Is there anyone in the booth
21 who can come down and help us with the
22 microphone? Perhaps we can swap it out with one
23 of the ones on the table.

24 MR. SANFORD: I will wait.

25 (Recess taken to fix the microphone.)

1 MR. HACKWORTH: You can continue with your
2 testimony now.

3 MR. SANFORD: That was done deliberately and
4 I don't know appreciate it. I definitely don't
5 appreciate that. That was done deliberately.
6 The first time was comical enough; the second
7 time was more comical. Now, that is more living
8 proof that you have a beef with me which you
9 don't want me to know. First, you dis me in my
10 borough last Tuesday and now you dis me here in
11 Brooklyn today.

12 First of all, other people are registered to
13 speak and I don't want to take their time.

14 What you did to me last Tuesday was
15 unacceptable, I already told you what happened.
16 But I will say this much, you know, if it happens
17 again, I am taking legal action against you. I
18 don't have to tolerate that. If I preregister to
19 speak at a public hearing, you are going to
20 accommodate me. You are violating my rights. I
21 said that before. So if it happens again, there
22 is a good chance I might take legal action
23 against you. Maybe then you will wake up and
24 realize that you have a responsibility and it
25 should be carried out. I will see you during

1 round three. That is, if you promote it.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Joan
3 Gibbs, to be followed by Shmuel Lefkowitz.

4 MS. GIBBS: Good evening. My name is Joan
5 Gibbs and I am the general counsel for the Center
6 for Law and Social Justice here at Medgar Evers.

7 As our executive director, Esmerelda Simmons
8 testified in Harlem at the Schomburg last week, I
9 won't repeat our background or our mission or
10 anything like that. Short and get straight to
11 the point.

12 I would like to begin with some
13 recommendations that we have for the Commission.
14 The first is we urge that the Commission adopt
15 the Unity Map as its final plan. The Unity Map,
16 which as you probably have heard by now, was the
17 product of the work of a coalition of civil
18 rights organizations, in addition to the Center
19 for Law and Social Justice, LatinoJustice, the
20 Asian-American Legal Defense Fund, as well as
21 National Institute for Latino Policy. The map
22 has laid out an entire 51 District City Council's
23 plan and it is our opinion in keeping with the
24 two mandates of the (inaudible); namely, the 10
25 percent rule and also, and most important

1 perhaps, the Voting Rights Act.

2 Our second recommendation, we think that
3 this is critically important, is that the
4 Commission allow time for the community to
5 comment on your final plan. On your current
6 schedule -- or your current schedule, rather,
7 does not provide for comment on the final plan
8 before it is submitted to the City Council, and
9 we think that that is completely unacceptable.

10 As for particular districts, I would like to
11 talk about two, mainly; that is, first, the 46th
12 District, which you have heard something about
13 already. But I would like to talk about
14 something else that has not been spoken about, as
15 of yet, at least, and that is the evidence of
16 racially polarized voting from past elections
17 under the current districting as you have drawn
18 it. So what we did at CLSJ was we looked at some
19 election results for the 46th District under the
20 Commission's plan and on the Unity Plan. And to
21 that end, when Ferrer ran against Bloomberg, 26
22 of the people and the Commission's district as
23 drawn voted for Ferrer versus 71.1 percent voted
24 for Bloomberg. On the Unity Plan, by contrast,
25 32 percent the people voted for -- 35 percent of

1 the people voted for Ferrer and 65 percent voted
2 for Bloomberg. When Bloomberg ran against
3 Thompson, under your plan, 45.2 percent of the
4 people voted for Thompson, 51 percent vote for
5 Bloomberg. Under the Unity Map that we have
6 submitted 57 percent voted for Thompson and
7 40 percent voted for an Bloomberg and we think
8 that is really evidence of greatly polarized
9 voting. And we also would like to urge you to
10 reconsider the current configuration of the
11 district in Harlem. Thank you.

12 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Rabbi
13 Shmuel Lefkowitz, to be followed by Helal Sheik.

14 RABBI LEFKOWITZ: Thank you. Shmuel
15 Lefkowitz, vice president of community services
16 of Agudath Israel of America.

17 We are also here for common interest, we
18 want the common interest of our community to be
19 united. I would like to thank the Commission for
20 the opportunity to testify and also for the
21 outreach that they did, they did a very good
22 outreach program in reaching out to the different
23 communities, especially ours, to ask us what is
24 it that we see in the present districting
25 Commission's plan before it was submitted. The

1 district Commission subsequently submitted their
2 plan and basically it's the same -- it's very
3 similar to what was submitted that we had for the
4 past ten years and basically the new plan cuts
5 our community into nine parts. We are
6 represented -- we have residents of our community
7 in Council Districts 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 47
8 and 48, some of the districts that were mentioned
9 here before, different groups that are interested
10 in common interests, we are part of those
11 districts, and we should really have our own
12 district. There is no net gain in the voting
13 power, if we are disseminated into nine different
14 parts. Our biggest chunk of the community is in
15 Council District 44, which is represented by
16 Councilman David Greenfield, and in that area, we
17 do have a councilman and we have a representative
18 and we have representation in that community.
19 But, again, even in the 44th, small parts of
20 Borough Park in the 44th were fine, but if
21 Borough Park was divided into the 38 -- pieces
22 went into the 38th and the 39th. Kensington
23 when into -- which was currently -- which is
24 currently in the past district map entirely in
25 the 39th, is proposed to be cut into the 39th and

1 the 40th. It's divided into two Council
2 districts. Midwood is divided into the 45th, the
3 40th and the 47th. Marine Park was completely
4 thrown into the 46th. Bensonhurst was cut into
5 the three parts, the Jewish part of Bensonhurst
6 was cut into the 43rd, the 44th and the 47th. We
7 are proposing the map, it's on the Web, into
8 three distinct districts that joins our
9 community, communities of interests, our interest
10 to solidify and strengthen the community's voice
11 in pursuit of common interests and concerns. Are
12 there better ways to design Council districts in
13 our community? Maybe. Has anyone produced an
14 alternative? Not that I know of. We would
15 welcome other ideas, but the goal is there is no
16 question that the borders of the two districts we
17 have created are the borders of our community,
18 give or take a bit. The border of Eighth Avenue
19 to Flatbush Avenue, from Church Avenue to Avenue
20 U, with some minor changes in there, that is our
21 community and we want to remain united, and based
22 on the numbers that divides into three beautiful,
23 nice districts, thank you very much.

24 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker is Helal Sheik, to be

1 followed by Shimshi Heszkel.

2 MR. SHEIK: Good evening. My name is Helal
3 Sheik. I am a public school teacher. I came
4 here for District 37. I live in Brooklyn,
5 District 37, which is border of city line guarded
6 by Dewey Street. The Bangladeshi people, we are
7 growing over there, like right (inaudible) we
8 have mostly Bengali people, like almost 3,000
9 people there, we are praying in the same mosques,
10 but there is two different districts, one is in
11 District 32 and District 37. So all since we
12 don't have any representative for Bangladeshi,
13 but most of the people are on the border Dewey
14 Street, so I am requesting if it is possible to
15 take a little bit up to at least Woodhaven
16 Boulevard through the highway, Woodhaven
17 Boulevard through if you go Jamaica Avenue, so
18 then we have a decent amount of people that we
19 are -- we are all the same communities, like the
20 same all from Bangladeshi, we pray same mosque,
21 but we are voting for different, and we don't
22 have any representative from that side.

23 So I would request if it is possible to add
24 in something from that side. Because all of the
25 people there on that side living right on the

1 border, we Bangladeshi, we don't have no
2 representative, so please, I mean try to
3 reconsider for that part, if you could do it?
4 Thank you. Thank you.

5 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Shimshi
6 Heszkel, to be followed by Joel Rosenfeld.

7 MR. HESZKEL: Good evening. My name is
8 Shimshi Heszkel. I am the executive director of
9 Mekimi, an organization serving thousands of
10 cancer patients throughout New York City and
11 tri-state area. Hundreds of them are located in
12 the Borough Park area, which is the 44th Council
13 District and the 39th Council District. Our
14 organization brings joy, happiness and comfort to
15 the sick. We surprise a lot on the discretionary
16 funding from City Council, including councilman
17 David Greenfield and Councilman Brad Lander.

18 By cutting out the 39th Council District
19 from Borough Park and making the entire Borough
20 Park under Councilman David Greenfield, our funds
21 will be reduced substantially and it will have an
22 effect on the amount of services we could provide
23 to the cancer patients; therefore, I ask you, the
24 Commission, to please leave Councilman Brad
25 Lander with his part of Borough Park, so he also

1 represents us, he represents the people we serve,
2 and we can bring happiness to a bigger part of
3 the community and have more funds by having more
4 council members representing us. Thank you very
5 much.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Joel Rosenfeld, to be
8 followed by Avi Spitzer.

9 MR. ROSENFELD: Good evening. My name is
10 Joel Rosenfeld. My wife and I, together with our
11 kids, are lifelong residents of Borough Park, in
12 Brooklyn. I am a member of the Bobov community,
13 one of the largest Hasidic sects in New York.
14 When your Founding Fathers created this great
15 nation, they understood that even though the
16 majority rules, the minority still has -- should
17 get representative and should have their rights.
18 Borough Park as the neighborhood with the largest
19 population of the Hasidic Jews outside of Israel
20 has particular needs, has a very large
21 concentration of Holocaust survivors and on a
22 city level, Borough Park is currently represented
23 by two great councilman, David Greenfield and
24 Brad Lander. There is two ways to dilute a voice
25 of a community; one, is split the community into

1 several districts, so that they are a minority in
2 each district and have no voice; the other one is
3 to put a whole community into one district. We
4 all know how the City is run, where the mayor has
5 all of the power and an individual city council
6 member, other than district proclamations and
7 naming streets, has little power and the only way
8 to have a say in the matter is to get a coalition
9 of a few council members, thereby by forming a
10 consensus.

11 Borough Park has it's unique needs, and if
12 the whole Borough Park gets lumped into Dave
13 Greenfield's district it will lose its voice in
14 City Council and, quite frankly, many of the
15 worthy organizations of Borough Park will lose
16 the funding that Lander has given them;
17 therefore, I would like to urge the committee to
18 leave the 39th and 44th Districts the way it was
19 until now, so that are Borough Park can have two
20 districts that represent them. Thank you.

21 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

22 Our next speaker is Avi Spitzer, to be
23 followed by Kim Wong.

24 MR. SPITZER: Good evening. My name is Avi
25 Spitzer. I serve as the executive director of

1 the Sephardic Community Federation, SCF. SCF is
2 the umbrella public policy organizations
3 representing the Sephardic Jewish community of
4 Greater New York. The bulk of the Sephardic
5 Jewish community's population is located in
6 Brooklyn, and I am here today to testify
7 specifically about areas of concern to the
8 Brooklyn Sephardic community.

9 First, I am concerned that the proposed map
10 would dilute the strength of the Sephardic Jewish
11 community in the Midwood area, along Avenues I
12 through K. Previously, the area from East 9th
13 Street to East 17th Street was all in the 44th
14 Council District. Under the new proposal, Avenue
15 I would be in the 40th and April of J would be in
16 the 45th Council Districts. The SCF thinks this
17 would hurt the community and we strongly
18 recommend that you restore the old lines that
19 have this area completely within the 44th Council
20 District.

21 The 44th is home to the majority of the
22 Sephardic Jewish community and to remove these
23 blocks would dilute the Sephardic community's
24 vote. What's more, major community institutions,
25 like Yeshivah of Flatbush would be displaced

1 under this proposal.

2 I would ask, also, that the rest of Avenue I
3 through J, up through 26th Street be included in
4 either the 44th or the 48th Council District.
5 That strip would be (inaudible) in the 45th
6 Council District. More generally, we support
7 keeping these lines in the 45th Council District;
8 however, we would recommend that the Jewish
9 community from Avenue I to Kings Highway, from
10 Nostrand to Flatbush Avenue either be included in
11 this very same 45th Council District or be
12 included in the 48th Council District to maximize
13 communities of interest.

14 MS. BRAGG: Can you say those again? I'm
15 sorry.

16 MR. SPITZER: I'm sorry?

17 MS. BRAGG: Would you state those boundaries
18 again.

19 MR. SPITZER: Sure. Avenue I to Kings
20 Highway, from Nostrand to Flatbush Avenue either
21 be included in this very same 45th Council
22 District or be included in the 48th Council
23 District to maximize communities of interest.

24 Also, we support the move of Manhattan Beach
25 from the 48th to the 46th Council District of a

1 similar population.

2 Finally, we oppose any proposal to created
3 in so-call super Jewish districts. That is why
4 we join with the neighbors of Borough Park in
5 asking that Borough Park have two members of the
6 City Council representing it, specifically the
7 44th and the 39th Council Districts, rather than
8 just one.

9 Thank you for your consideration.

10 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker will be Kim Wong, to be
12 followed by Joan Gordon.

13 MS. WONG: Good evening. My name is Kim
14 Wong and I am speaking on behalf of ACCORD or the
15 Asian American Community Coalition on
16 Redistricting and Democracy.

17 ACCORD is a nonpartisan pan-Asian coalition
18 of organizations and individuals committed to
19 advancing the opportunity of Asian Americans and
20 minority communes to meaningfully participate in
21 the political process.

22 The growth of the Asian-American population
23 in New York City has dramatically outpaced all
24 other racial groups, as well as the population at
25 large. And now, in 2012, it is imperative that

1 the City Council districts be redrawn so that the
2 Asian-American voters will no longer
3 disenfranchised and their collective voices made
4 ineffective in elections.

5 In Brooklyn, the growth of the
6 Asian-American population is a astounding, a
7 40 percent overall increase and a 46 percent
8 increase among the voting-age population. There
9 are now over a quarter of a million Asian
10 Americans in Brooklyn alone. This means around 1
11 out of 4 Asian Americans in New York City is a
12 resident of Brooklyn. Many of the Asian
13 Americans live in an area that spans from parts
14 of Sunset Park over to much of Bensonhurst. As
15 in other boroughs being divided among multiple
16 districts the fracturing or cracking of minority
17 population is today's greatest problem New York
18 City's Asian American are facing in our current
19 district lines in preliminary map released last
20 month. That map divides and dilutes the
21 Asian-American population of southwest Brooklyn.
22 Instead of being divided into five districts, we
23 are now divided into four. Which is still simply
24 unacceptable to our community.

25 Consider the southern boundaries of District

1 38, while 65th Street is the main thoroughfare
2 for Bensonhurst, the district's southern
3 boundaries runs parallel to this on 66 Street,
4 just one block south. Also, District 43, 44 and
5 47 converge in the very middle of Bensonhurst, as
6 defined by our community.

7 As done in the Unity Map, we recommend a
8 configuration whereby Sunset Park and the core of
9 Bensonhurst are contained in just two districts.
10 We again express our coalitions's support for the
11 Unity Map drawn in collaboration with the
12 African-American, Latino and Asian-American
13 communities.

14 ACCORD also supports and recommends the
15 testimony of its member groups, especially those
16 such as OCA-New York and the United Chinese
17 Association of Brooklyn that have constituencies
18 at issue in these areas. We look forward to a
19 district plan that gives an equal voice to the
20 Asian-American voters and voters of Brooklyn and
21 all of New York City. Thank you.

22 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Joan Gordon, to be
24 followed by Resach Greenberg.

25 Do we have Joan Gordon here?

1 Okay. Our next speaker will be Resach
2 Greenberg, to be followed by Shea Langsam.

3 Resach Greenberg?

4 Shea Langsam?

5 Yeruchim Silber?

6 To be followed by Jeff Leb.

7 MR. LANGSAM: Hi, my name is Shea Langsam, I
8 am from the Rav Chesed organization, we are
9 helping --

10 MS. BRAGG: To the mike, please.

11 MR. LANGSAM: Hi, my name is Shea Langsam.
12 I am from Rav Chesed organization, in Borough
13 Park, we are helping needy families.

14 I would like to ask the Commission to
15 consider about redistricting with the Council
16 District (inaudible) and we are looking forward
17 to their support and for the help of our
18 communities so thank you.

19 MR. HACKWORTH: The next speaker will be
20 Yeruchim Silber, to be followed by Jeff Leb.

21 MR. SILBER: Thank you.

22 To all of the members of the Commission,
23 first, let me thank you on behalf of all of the
24 citizens on New York for your very important work
25 in ensuring that all New Yorkers are properly and

1 adequately represented in the City Council.

2 My name is Yeruchim Silber and I am the
3 executive director of the Borough Park Jewish
4 Community Council, or JCC.

5 Since 1997, JCC has served as a one-stop
6 shop for all of the social service needs of
7 hundred of thousands residents of Borough Park
8 and the surrounding areas of Sunset Park, Dyker
9 Heights and Kengsington.

10 We serve all clients, regardless of race,
11 religion, or any other factor, with needs such as
12 benefits enrollment, crisis assistance, career
13 counseling, job development and much more.

14 For many, our councils are lifeline to
15 accessing important government benefits that work
16 to help lift them out the poverty. We are a
17 proud affiliate of Metropolitan Council on Jewish
18 Poverty and, thus, have access to all of the
19 services provided by Met Council.

20 Throughout the years of existence, a good
21 portion of our budget has come through City
22 Council member allocations. We have been
23 fortunate to be represented by council members
24 who have recognized the important work that we do
25 and are providing funding allocations

1 accordingly. We, on our part, take great efforts
2 to use the dollars wisely and with full
3 transparency.

4 The Borough Park neighborhood has a history
5 of being represented by these two very able
6 council members. From the time the council was
7 first expanded in 1991, this neighborhood has
8 been divided into the 39th and 44th Council
9 District, as my previously colleagues have
10 testified so ably. During the last process ten
11 years ago, a good portion of the Borough Park
12 section on the 39th District was eliminated;
13 although, the district still represents about
14 25 percent of the neighborhood. In the current
15 proposed map, the area is eliminated even
16 further, where the 39th Council District
17 represents almost none of Borough Park.

18 In the current fiscal year, our organization
19 received nearly \$15,000 in discretionary funds
20 from Council Member Lander, who represents the
21 39th.

22 In addition to that direct funding, Council
23 Member Lander, along with his colleague, Council
24 Member Greenfield, who represents the 44th
25 District, have been staunch advocates for our

1 needs, both on funding and our other issues. By
2 losing that seat, our organization, and many
3 others, as others have previously testified,
4 could lose access to valuable funding
5 representing the (inaudible) of our organizations
6 as well as the advocacy of additional members.

7 I would like to respectfully request the
8 Commission that the 39th District continue
9 representing portions of Borough Park. I believe
10 a fair division would be have the areas west of
11 13th Avenue represented by the 39th Council
12 District and the areas east of 13th Avenue
13 continue to represented by the 44th Council
14 District. This division would ensure the fairest
15 and best representation for the residents of
16 Borough Park. Thank you.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Jeff
18 Leb, to be followed by Rabbi David Niederman.

19 MR. LEB: Good evening. My name is Jeff
20 Leb. I am the COO of Otsar Family Services, I am
21 a longtime political and community activist, and
22 I am here today to testify about the Jewish
23 communities in southern Brooklyn and the proposed
24 redistricting maps.

25 I would like to start by saying that I am

1 very pleased that Marine Park remains in the 45th
2 Council District and that the community of
3 interest in Manhattan Beach is now part of that
4 district as well.

5 I am concerned that the Jewish community
6 Midwood is diluted by having parts of Avenue I
7 through Avenue K divided into three different
8 Council districts and recommend that those areas
9 be reunited into the 44th Council Districts.

10 Also, I believe that the super Jewish
11 districts only serve to dilute the power of the
12 Jewish community and oppose any proposal to
13 create super Jewish districts. For example, I
14 believe it is in the best interest of the Borough
15 Park community to have two council members,
16 instead of one, as is currently proposed.

17 Thank you very much for allowing me the time
18 to share my views in the redistricting and thank
19 you for your consideration.

20 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

21 Our next speaker is Rabbi David Niederman,
22 to be followed by --

23 So our next speaker will be David Pollock,
24 to be followed by Akiva Kizelnik.

25 MR. POLLOCK: Thank you.

1 Good evening and thanks. My name is David
2 Pollock. I am with the Jewish Community
3 Relations Council. I have been honored to serve
4 as the associate executive director and I have
5 been there since 1980, which means that this is
6 my fourth cycle of redistricting. I have earned
7 high gray hairs. I am here --

8 I have had to analyze and comment on the
9 redistricting process for the Jewish communities
10 of New York. And you will note that I say
11 communities, because there is no single Jewish
12 community. We are incredibly diverse.
13 Geographically, we reside throughout the City.
14 Religiously, we span respective from secularism
15 to ultra Orthodoxy. Economically, we are rich,
16 poor, and everything in between. Politically, we
17 are liberal to conservatives, and our immigrants
18 are from the former Soviet Union, Syria, Israel,
19 Iran. We have very significant communities all
20 over, and each of these communities will come to
21 the redistricting process with different ideas,
22 and what I have tried to do is to talk about
23 consensus. Because at the JCRC, we try to reach
24 some consensus.

25 So what did we do? Fortunately, you have a

1 very talented executive director, Carl reached
2 out to us very early on in this process and asked
3 us for our general comments, and I did two
4 things. One is that I created two sets of maps
5 for the use of the staff, and these maps show the
6 contours of the Jewish community, both where the
7 Jews are and, by the way, where the Russian
8 speakers are. And fortunately what I found is
9 that when I looked at the preliminary draft, it
10 was very, very clear that the makeup of the map
11 was sensitive to the concerns of the contours of
12 the Jewish community, where the Jewish community
13 started and stopped, and also some general
14 principles that we spoke about with the staff.

15 The general principles are, No. 1, about
16 elected officials. We believe that the interests
17 of the Jewish communities can be protected and
18 advance by sensitive and effective individuals,
19 whether they are Jewish or not. We didn't come
20 up with this this year, by the way; this goes
21 back to 1982.

22 The district lines, we believe that district
23 lines affecting Jewish communities should be
24 facilitate the election of effective, sensitive
25 and receptive public officials. And finally,

1 maintaining a critical mass. Towards that end,
2 we have advocated that districts include,
3 wherever possible, a critical mass of Jews and
4 that district lines keep smaller Jewish
5 communities together so that their electoral
6 clout is not negated. So -- I'm sorry.

7 Putting all of that into the diversity, the
8 preliminary draft is not perfect, but I am
9 looking at it, and given my experience, I
10 understand and I probably could guess where all
11 of the lines -- most of the lines are coming
12 from.

13 Some of the problems that my colleague Rabbi
14 Niederman will talk about are of my own making,
15 because I gave, you know, the data that I gave
16 the staff did not include the changes in the
17 election districts from 2012. But that is
18 something -- generally, this is a very sensitive
19 map and it is a very excellent starting point.

20 One of the concerns that we do have is about
21 the possibility, given, you know, some of the
22 comments that you have heard, people have tried
23 to work toward the balkanization of the city,
24 that we should keep everyone alike together and
25 have as many single interest constituencies

1 possible --

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Mr. Pollock, I'm sorry, we
3 have a number of speakers tonight.

4 MR. POLLOCK: Okay.

5 We believe the key to effective
6 representation for Jewish community is having
7 large enough numbers in the district to be
8 important for a number of a broader coalition. I
9 think that holds true for other communities. And
10 we think that when elected officials are called
11 on to effectively balance parochial and universal
12 interests, those elected officials are destined
13 to serve our city well.

14 Thank you very much.

15 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Akiva Kizelnik, to be
17 followed by Hymie Shamah.

18 MR. KIZELNIK: Good evening, thank you for
19 taking my time. My name is Akiva Kizelnik. I am
20 a member of the Community Board 12.

21 MR. ROMANO: Can you bring the mike up
22 towards you a little?

23 MR. KIZELNIK: Yes.

24 My name is Akiva Kizelnik. I am a member of
25 Community Board 12. I am also a member of the

1 distinct organization called (inaudible). I live
2 on 42nd Street, between Fort Hamilton Parkway and
3 New Utrecht. In the old map, I always felt like
4 I was on the outside because I was from the few
5 streets in our community that was in the 38th
6 District. We have two distinguished council
7 members representing our community, Councilman
8 Greenfield in the 44, Councilman Lander in
9 Districts 39. I do appreciate the fact that you
10 put me into District 39, but I feel that you took
11 away a big part of District 39 from Councilman
12 Lander -- from Borough Park from Councilman
13 Lander and what happened is more people live in
14 my neighborhood became border residents, you have
15 a few streets from the District 39, a few blocks
16 District 38, and I would like to separate it out
17 of the bulk of the community and I feel that the
18 model that we had, which is having two
19 representatives represent our community,
20 Councilman Greenfield and Councilman Lander, work
21 very well. So I would ask you if you can give
22 back Councilman Lander a bigger part of our
23 community so we should all feel that we are
24 equally represented. Thank you.

25 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker will

1 actually be Hymie Shamah, to be followed by Rabbi
2 David Niederman.

3 MR. SHAMAH: I thank the Commission for
4 allowing me to speak. My name is Hymie Shamah.
5 I am current president of Congregation Beth
6 Torah, located at 1061 Ocean Parkway.

7 Congregation Beth Torah is one of the
8 leading Sephardic synagogues along Ocean Parkway
9 in the Midwood area of Brooklyn. We serve over
10 800 families in this neighborhood. Recently on
11 the high holidays, we hosted over 2500 people at
12 our services. Almost all of our members live
13 between Avenue I and Avenue O and between
14 McDonald Avenue and Ocean Avenue. That community
15 from Ocean Avenue is served by a -- excuse me.

16 I was disappointed to learn that our
17 neighborhood, which was almost entirely
18 represented by Councilman David Greenfield, is
19 now being represent by three members of City
20 Council. Specifically, aside from us all living
21 in the same area, we shop on the same strip on
22 Avenue J between Coney Island and Ocean Avenue,
23 many of us send our children to the Yeshivah of
24 Flatbush, whether it is the preschool on East 9th
25 Street, the elementary school on East 10th Street

1 or the high school on East 17th Street.

2 Also, many of the issues that we face,
3 whether it's the traffic along Ocean -- Coney
4 Island Avenue or along Ocean Parkway are areas of
5 mutual concern. The synagogue that I represent
6 is one of several large Sephardic synagogues that
7 serve the large Jewish community in this
8 neighborhood. I imagine that all other
9 synagogues have the similar concerns. We would
10 like to maintain our status in Districts 44 and I
11 respectfully request that you reinstate the areas
12 of Avenue I and Avenue K from Avenue K on the
13 East 9th Street side to Coney Island Avenue back
14 into Councilman David Greenfield's district,
15 District 44. Thank you.

16 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Rabbi David Niederman,
18 to be followed by Hindi Bendel.

19 MR. NIEDERMAN: Good evening. Thank you
20 very much, Members of the Distinguished
21 Commission for the opportunity for us to appear,
22 the people, and tell you exactly what is true on
23 the ground, actually what is happening and what
24 we believe is in the best interest of the
25 community to ensure that a delivery of services

1 continues, and expands, even.

2 So the UJO, that is the director of UJO, UJO
3 was founded close to fifty years ago and today it
4 represents a growing community of about 70,000
5 people, Jewish residents living in the area, in
6 Williamsburg and expanding and representing more
7 than 200 institutions, synagogues, schools. And
8 the important thing in that square mile, we have
9 18,000 children. Out of this 18,000 children,
10 our schools is a -- over, over a thousand -- 1300
11 students have been there for ten years in the
12 Broadway Triangle area and now a big building
13 erected -- a new building, a \$20 million project
14 is being erected in the Broadway Triangle area,
15 which is going to accommodate 1300 new -- 1100 --
16 I'm sorry, 1100 new students. So we are very
17 happy that ten years ago you trusted us and we
18 told you that a shift in population because of
19 internal expansion is moving, is moving south and
20 instead of running to Union, you expanded and
21 included the 33rd -- the Broadway Triangle within
22 the 33 Councilmanic District. Since then, the
23 census -- and I gave you some information -- will
24 show that the community continues to grow, and
25 you recognize that. And, therefore, Bedford, you

1 extended the 33rd District into Bedford, to cover
2 the thousands of people who live there and
3 institutions. But somehow, which I don't know,
4 people did not recognize that what you did last
5 year -- ten years ago was actually a mirror to
6 the Broadway Triangle, which is so vital for
7 close to twenty years, but the last ten years, we
8 have worked so closely on the development of that
9 area that has been recognized by the City and
10 that piece was omitted. As a community of
11 interest, the -- it's crucial and it's important
12 that we the -- the Broadway Triangle goes in,
13 back into the congress -- the Council -- 33
14 Councilmanic District, so that you don't divide
15 the community in half at such an important time.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Hindy Bendel, to be
19 followed by Ari Kagan.

20 MS. BENDEL: Good evening. I want to thank
21 you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I am
22 speaking on behalf of Community Board 14. My
23 name is Hindy Bendel and I am a member of the
24 Community Board 14. I am an active member in the
25 community and I am a homeowner within the area of

1 the 44th District that is being remapped, which
2 is Avenue I through K from McDonald Avenue to
3 East 17th Street.

4 Councilman Greenfield represents this area
5 and has made many significant improvements to our
6 community. As a member of the community board, I
7 have worked with Councilman Greenfield regarding
8 various issues. Councilman Greenfield is always
9 forthcoming and advocates for our community's
10 behalf. Avenue J is a vibrant commercial strip
11 and Councilman Greenfield is aware of our
12 concerns, he has recently intervened to move a
13 bus stop closer to a train station, so that we
14 wouldn't have to walk a block from the train to
15 get a bus; he has improved the cleanliness of
16 Avenue J and the surrounding areas and he has
17 helped to continue -- he has helped continue to
18 invigorate our neighborhood.

19 It would be a great disadvantage if the
20 redistricting occurs. In order to see the
21 continued growth and improvement, Community Board
22 14 strongly opposes the change to the 44th
23 District. We are requesting that you please keep
24 this community together and do not ratify the
25 proposed change.

1 Thank you so much and have a great evening.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Ari Kagan, to be
4 followed by Gregory Davidzon.

5 MR. KAGAN: Good evening. Dear members of
6 the New York City Council District Commission.
7 My name is Ari Kagan and I am a board member of
8 The United Association of East European Jewry, a
9 not-for-profit organization, working primarily
10 with Russian-speaking immigrants. I am also a
11 newly elected democratic district leader in the
12 46th Assembly District. I live in Brighton Beach
13 and I love New York. The Russian community is at
14 home in our great city. Russian community
15 members achieve tremendous success in business,
16 cultures, sports, arts, science medicine and
17 politics. There are over 400,000 Russian
18 Americans in all five boroughs. Brooklyn is a
19 home of the largest Russian-speaking community in
20 the United States of America. We went a long way
21 for the last ten years in New York's electoral
22 politics. Today, there are Russian Americans in
23 New York State Assembly and in New York State
24 Senate, but until now, there are no Russian
25 Americans in New York City Council and community

1 is eager to change the situation.

2 When we looked at the proposed redistricting
3 map, it became obvious that the lines of the 48th
4 Council District are redrawn in a special way to
5 divide the Russian-speaking voters and not to
6 give real opportunities to Russian Americans be
7 in elections in this district.

8 Currently, 48th District includes all
9 Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, parts of the
10 Sheepshead Bay, (inaudible) and Midwood. The
11 Russian-American community today is about
12 25 percent of the total electorate in the 48th
13 District. The Commission cut out Manhattan Beach
14 from the 48th District and instead added to 48th
15 District a significant part of Midwood; by doing
16 this, the Commission is diluting the voting power
17 of the Russian-speaking community in the 48th
18 District. So I am asking the Districting
19 Commission to move back to the 44th District,
20 currently represented by Councilman David
21 Greenfield, several blocks in Midwood in areas of
22 Avenue J, K, M, N that were added to the common
23 boundaries of 48th District by you.

24 I am also asking the Commission to include
25 several buildings with many Russian-speaking

1 residents located between Seabreeze Avenue and
2 West Brighton into the 48th District, excluding
3 them from the cut off lines from the 47th
4 District -- I will give you a copy of my
5 speech -- which implementing all of these
6 measures, you will ensuring that Russian-speaking
7 communities will have next year a fair chance to
8 elect a first Russian American to the New York
9 City Council. It will be a tremendous milestone
10 for our community and for the whole New York
11 City.

12 Thank you very much.

13 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker will be Gregory Davidzon,
15 followed by Chaim Israel.

16 MR. DAVIDZON: Dear members of New York City
17 Council Redistricting Commission. My name is
18 Gregory Davidson and I am on one of the
19 Russian-speaking radio station, in few Russian
20 newspapers. My --

21 You know, I try to be short. And probably
22 my speech will be very similar to Ari Kagan,
23 because we are on the same team.

24 Based on my job at the radio station, the
25 newspaper, we have a very big feedback from the

1 Russian-speaking community and I believe we can
2 express our vision. And my concern most about
3 the two districts, which are 44 and 48.

4 From my point of view, without absolutely --
5 without any significant reasons, it was split. I
6 think nobody will argue the main goal of
7 redistricting is to keep communities together.
8 Sometimes possible, sometimes impossible, but in
9 this case, I don't see any reason why some part
10 of 44th District was cut and put together with
11 the 48th and 48th cut another way.

12 If you take a look on the old map, I believe
13 majority of the people who live in 45th -- I'm
14 sorry, 44th and 48th satisfied with their
15 representative and with the lines. So I would
16 like to ask Commission to move back to the 44th
17 District, currently represented by Councilman
18 David Greenfield, several blocks in Midwood, in
19 areas between Avenue J, K L, N and take them
20 certainly from the new plan for them to the in
21 the 48th.

22 At the same time, I would like to ask you to
23 increase a little bit the 48th District,
24 including the Seabreeze Avenue and West Brighton.

25 And anything else, I think it's very

1 acceptable what we see on the new map.

2 Thank you very much.

3 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Chaim Israel, to be
5 followed by Rochelle Zami.

6 MR. ISRAEL: Good evening Ladies and
7 Gentlemen, Members of the Commission, and thank
8 you for the privilege.

9 My name is Chaim Israel. I am a lifelong
10 resident of Borough Park and I am active member
11 of Bloomberg's not-for-profit organization
12 serving the needy and less fortunate in the
13 neighborhood.

14 I would like to speak of the support of the
15 Council district map proposed by Greater of
16 Israel of American. My focus is the southern
17 tier of Brooklyn, particularly it's contiguous
18 neighborhoods comprising the bulk of the Orthodox
19 Jewish population and the subject area, these
20 neighborhoods are Borough Park, Mapleton,
21 Kengsington, Midwood, Madison, Marine Park and
22 parts of Bensonhurst.

23 According to the most recent census, the
24 combined population of the subject neighborhoods,
25 the population is in excess of 540,000 people,

1 equivalent to more than three full councilmanic
2 districts.

3 Please allow me to address the lesser issue
4 first. The preliminary draft released by the
5 Commission last month essentially follows the
6 district lines established ten years ago,
7 excepting some minor variances, superficially
8 appearing as insignificant adjustments; however,
9 closer examination of the district lines,
10 particularly along the edges of the neighborhoods
11 such as Borough Park, west of Fort Hamilton
12 Parkway, parts of Kensington, portions of Marine
13 Park and other small pockets of Orthodox Jewish
14 neighborhoods revealed a series of degradation of
15 political efficacy of those voters as the
16 preliminary plan divides these already relatively
17 small areas into yet multiple districts. That is
18 the lesser issue.

19 The larger issue is as follows: The
20 contiguous Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods in the
21 southern tier of Brooklyn in the preliminary plan
22 are sliced into nine, nine councilmanic
23 districts. The only neighborhood, which some
24 disgracefully refer to as the "super Jewish
25 district," and I say that in quotations, is the

1 44th Councilmanic District in Borough Park, the
2 other neighborhoods are sliced into eight other
3 districts, effectively watering down their votes
4 essentially to make them virtually
5 inconsequential.

6 Additionally, the northwestern portion of
7 Borough Park is joined with Park Slope, a
8 community with which it shares very few issues
9 and concerns. The most recent councilmanic race
10 illustrates the varying unfairness and inequity.
11 The winning candidate received less than 5
12 percent of the Borough Park vote.

13 I will close with saying that while the
14 current lines may have reflected demographics ten
15 years ago, they most certainly don't reflect the
16 facts around today.

17 The current census data indicate a sharp
18 population growth in Orthodox Jewish community,
19 both numerically and geographically. To ignore
20 these facts, would be grossly unjust, unfair and
21 it would, in my opinion, violate the spirit of
22 the Voting Rights, as it vacuums political
23 competition and participation of the political
24 process guaranteed by the Constitution of this
25 great democracy, the United States of America.

1 Thank you for listening.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

3 Our next speaker is Rochelle Zami, to be
4 followed by Joe Levy.

5 MS. ZAMI: Good evening. My name is
6 Rochelle Zami and I am a board member of
7 Community Board 12 and I am an active member and
8 volunteer in the Sephardic Jewish community.

9 I am here today to express my concern
10 regarding the new maps of the 44th District.

11 The Sephardic Jewish community has been
12 split from the previous maps. Previously,
13 Councilman David Greenfield represented the area
14 from Avenue I to Avenue K, from McDonald Avenue
15 to East 17th Street, and in other areas until
16 Coney Island Avenue. The new maps put Avenue I
17 to J from East 9th Street to East 17th Street in
18 one district and the next block, Avenue J to K
19 from East 9th Street to East 17th Street, in
20 another district. This makes no sense. These
21 are communities of common interest. Many people
22 living in these neighborhoods shop, pray and send
23 their children to the same schools that are in
24 the rest of the area that is represented by
25 Councilman David Greenfield. I am hoping that

1 the Commission would please consider reversing
2 these lines to the previous ones, so that the
3 areas of Avenue I through K and East 9th Street
4 up east can be put back into Councilman David
5 Greenfield's district.

6 My children are students at the Yeshivah of
7 Flatbush on East 17th Street and Avenue J,
8 Yeshivah of Flatbush has thousands of children,
9 most of whom live in Councilman David
10 Greenfield's district and would be quite upset to
11 learn that he no longer represents their school.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

14 The next speaker is Joe Levy, to be followed
15 by David Shlomovich.

16 MR. LEVY: Good evening and thank you for
17 the opportunity to speak in front of you.

18 My name is Joe Levy and I am a member of the
19 Community Board 12, I am also a member of the
20 Beth Torah Congregation and are very active in
21 local community affairs.

22 I am here to ask the Commission to reverse
23 its decision to split Midwood into so many
24 different parts. Specifically I refer to a
25 disappointing change that would split the heart

1 of the Sephardic Jewish community from Avenue I
2 to Avenue K.

3 Currently, Council Member David Greenfield
4 represents the areas up until East 17th Street,
5 the new proposal will give one block, Avenue I,
6 to one council member, another block, Avenue J,
7 to another council member, and would leave a
8 third council member, Greenfield, with the rest.
9 If anything, we should be adding the blocks to
10 Greenfield's districts, not taking blocks away.
11 That is why I urge the Commission to, at the very
12 least, go back to the old map, which would have
13 Greenfield represent both of these areas.

14 Otherwise, we will be left with a situation
15 where literally myself and my friends, who are
16 all a part of the same community and live within
17 blocks of each other, will be represented by
18 three different members of the City Council.
19 That would dilute our voice and would be unfair
20 to our community.

21 Thank you very much for our time.

22 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is David Shlomovich, to be
24 followed by Mercedes Narcisse.

25 MR. SHLOMOVICH: Good evening. I want to

1 thank you, the Commission, for giving us the
2 opportunity to present our opinion over here.
3 That didn't happen in the place where I came for.

4 So but I am living in this district for
5 almost forty years, Councilman David Greenfield
6 was elected to the Council in 2010, the
7 councilman won with majority of the votes in
8 every single neighborhood of that district,
9 Midwood, Borough Park and Bensonhurst. I am
10 proud to say that I personally know Councilman
11 Greenfield for many years, and I know him always
12 to be professional, concerned and helpful leader
13 to our neighborhood and our district. He has
14 proven time and time again that this community
15 can always count on his honesty and integrity.

16 As a chairman of the community -- of the
17 transportation community of the Community Board
18 12, I worked with councilman on many issues,
19 including traffic on Coney Island Avenue, safety
20 and other public issues that we have. There is
21 no reason to remove East 10th Street and Coney
22 Island Avenue, why there is two blocks, there is
23 in the other area that they took away from him
24 that also I disagree. And personally East 10th
25 Street, and what was the reason the East 10th and

1 Coney Island Avenue is part of the same people,
2 we have the same ideas, same issues and take out
3 East 10th and Coney Island Avenue and just give
4 it to the other councilman? It is for this
5 reason that I urge the Commission to include our
6 neighborhood back into his new district, East
7 10th -- in specific, East 10th and Coney Island
8 Avenue should go back to David Greenfield's
9 district.

10 Thank you very much and have a good night.

11 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Mercedes Narcisse, to be
13 followed by Paul Schubert.

14 MS. NARCISSE: First and foremost, I have to
15 say thank God for giving me the opportunity to be
16 here this evening.

17 Members of distinguished panel, fellow
18 Brooklynites -- which is all of my friends here
19 in the house, whether you are from every part of
20 Brooklyn, you are my friend. We are in it
21 together -- elected officials, ladies and
22 gentlemen, my name is Mercedes Narcisse, I am a
23 registered nurse for over twenty-three years and
24 live and own a business and work in the Brooklyn
25 46th District for more over twenty-three years.

1 I have -- I am a board member of Community Board
2 18, I am a member of the Lions Club, I am a
3 member of the medical mission for NOVA, all of
4 that, I am talking about the culture part, the
5 business part, I have some business partner, we
6 work so hard in the community together.

7 And, now, I have to say I thank you for
8 giving me the opportunity to speak to you.

9 This issue is very dear to my heart, the
10 issue of redistricting. Every ten years, after a
11 national, a head count has always been continuous
12 and filled with controversy. What should be an
13 otherwise simple activity and process, drawing
14 electoral district lines to elect -- to reflect
15 changes in populations, has now become a complex,
16 hostile and bitter partisan slugfest that has
17 obviated and frustrated ordinary citizen, like
18 myself, of New York City and State. So, here we
19 are again today.

20 On October 2nd, the local media reported a
21 statement from Commissioner Hum on the issue of
22 fairness in the redistricting process, and I
23 quote, we certainly understand the gravity of
24 having a map that reflects our city and making
25 sure minority groups are represented fairly. It

1 was a map to start the conversation. We didn't
2 get everything right.

3 Our community in Brooklyn 46th District, now
4 holds you, which is Commissioner Hum's statement
5 -- I mean holds Commissioner to that statement.
6 This time, you can make sure that you get
7 everything right by adopting or taking a second
8 look and incorporate all of the part of the Unity
9 Map submitted by the Center for Law and Special
10 Justice.

11 My community and I support my map and as
12 well as the Unity Map. We believe that it is far
13 more objective and adheres to the letter and the
14 spirit of both the City Charter and the Voting
15 Rights Act of 1965 more than the Commission
16 present proposed boundaries.

17 I believe that the proposed redistricting
18 City Council map are presently drawn by the
19 Redistricting Commission are deeply fractured and
20 flawed and designed to protect the incumbency,
21 while disenfranchising entire communities.

22 In this context, and after careful review of
23 the proposed districts, I am in total agreement
24 with Brennan Center, that quote, "Epidemic of
25 gerrymandering causes a growing threat to our

1 democracy." You have the ability to end that.

2 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

3 MS. NARCISSE: For example, in our 46th
4 District, a community where I live and work all
5 of my adult life, raise my children, the first
6 one going to medical school right now, and own a
7 business. In the proposed Commission map, my
8 house is deliberately drawn out of the district,
9 to place me in 42nd Council District.

10 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

11 MS. NARCISSE: What this attempts to do is
12 to make sure that I would not be eligible to run
13 for the 46th District in 2013 and, therefore,
14 allow a candidate sanctioned and endorsed by the
15 Brooklyn Democratic party postured to win the
16 seat.

17 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

18 MS. NARCISSE: It will virtually ensure that
19 I will lose in the 42nd Districts, since I am not
20 known there, have and never worked reason to
21 (inaudible) the institution of people's
22 democracy.

23 MR. ROMANO: Thank you. We need to.

24 MS. NARCISSE: A broken district, I reject
25 that entirely and I intend to follow up, and I

1 thank you for your time and I thank you all. May
2 God bless you. And maybe you were elected and
3 selected, do the right thing for the communities.
4 Thank you very much.

5 MR. HACKWORTH: The next speaker was Paul
6 Schubert, to be followed by Steve Chung.

7 And please remember, as I mentioned at the
8 beginning of the hearing, if you go over the
9 time, you may be depriving your neighbors or
10 other community members of their opportunity to
11 testify today.

12 MR. SCHUBERT: Greetings, gentleman and
13 ladies.

14 Now, approximately 300 years ago, this great
15 nation was founded on the principle that all men
16 are equal, and around 1919 we decided to extend
17 that privilege to the ladies. Now, in our inner
18 cities, we have many different groups, we have
19 Irish people, Dominican people, Italian people,
20 and more recent immigrants from the Middle East
21 and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

22 Now, the original concept was that X amount
23 of people, like 160,000, could be represented by
24 one city councilman. But regrettably, man being
25 what he is, we don't want people who do not dress

1 like us, eat the same foods our grandma cooks and
2 go to the same religious institution representing
3 us. And as a result of this, I see a map that is
4 confusion. Now, using -- the Google earth
5 satellite enhanced version, I believe the only
6 really fair shake in a Jeffersonian democracy,
7 which means all man's vote is equal to any other
8 man's, regardless of who his grandmother is,
9 should be a rectangle. And using modern GPS and
10 satellite imagery, I believe we could cut the
11 City into rectangles of 160,000 average, we would
12 increase the Council seats. I am saying here
13 140,820, 45th District to the 33rd, which is a
14 170. And if I were to reduce all of these
15 districts to 160, as required by City Charter, I
16 believe I could add maybe half a dozen Council
17 seats. And we would make sure that everybody in
18 their rectangle got represented equally. As was
19 the original desire of the Founding Fathers of
20 our country. And I believe also the writers of
21 our State Charter and of our City Charter. And I
22 want to thank you, all of you people coming out
23 here. Democracy only works when you get
24 involved; it is not a spectator sport.

25 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

1 Our next speaker is Steve Chung, to be
2 followed by Jacqueline Smartt.

3 And I just want to note at this time that we
4 have many, many speakers that are registered and
5 given the time limitations in this location, it
6 is possible that not all will be able to speak
7 tonight.

8 Go ahead.

9 MR. CHUNG: Hi, good evening, ladies and
10 gentlemen, and good evening the Redistricting
11 Commission.

12 My name is Steve Chung and I am the
13 president of the United Chinese Association of
14 Brooklyn and we call ourself UCA.

15 UCA was founded in 2002 and its goal is to
16 improve the wellbeing of the Chinese immigrants
17 and family in Bensonhurst, and UCA also is a
18 member of ACCORD, which is the Asian American
19 Community Coalition on Redistricting and
20 Democracy. And we will endorse also one of our
21 event organizations, the Asian American Legal
22 Defense and Education Fund proposed City Council
23 district called the Unity Map.

24 And today, I would like to focus my concern
25 in the two most populated Asian neighborhoods in

1 Brooklyn, which is the Sunset Park and
2 Bensonhurst. Although, grouping Asian community
3 interests into a political district is one of our
4 objectives, but it is not our primary goal. Even
5 though we can draw a very close Asian population
6 majority, a new City Council district, by using
7 the newly created first ever Asian population
8 majority Assembly District 49, using it as a base
9 core and we can actually stretch it out into
10 Bensonhurst neighborhood, we can almost create a
11 50 percent Asian population majority district.
12 But we didn't do that, because the Unity Map is a
13 collective agreement. We are also concerned on
14 other minority group, like the black community
15 and the Latino community.

16 And the other thing is I would like to -- on
17 behalf of our Chinese community in Bensonhurst,
18 we would like to endorse these two city district,
19 which is the 38, including the Sunset Park and
20 also District 47, which is the Bensonhurst. By
21 doing that, we can create an Asian population
22 rate in Sunset Park which is 37 percent Asian and
23 34 percent in Bensonhurst.

24 With the fastest Asian population increase
25 rate in the next ten years, we most likely we can

1 create two of, uh, the influential districts in
2 Brooklyn, and I hope by doing that we can
3 motivate the Asian population to get involved in
4 voting and being more contributive to our
5 political system. Thank you.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Jacqueline Smartt, to be
8 followed by Valeriy Savinkin.

9 MS. SMARTT: Good evening. My name, as he
10 said before, is Jacqueline Smartt and I am a
11 resident of Canarsie. I moved to Canarsie in
12 1995, when the area was in the height of white
13 plant. Initially, we had Jewish and Italian
14 neighbors on either side of us, but eventually
15 that did he demographic changed; white-owned
16 businesses moved and minority-owned businesses
17 took over. Contrary to popular opinion at the
18 time, we did not bring down the neighborhood,
19 rather the immigrant population that moved in,
20 accustomed to owning and maintaining properties
21 in the countries that they migrated from,
22 improved their properties and instead of
23 declining, the property values climbed upwards.

24 During the real estate recession, real
25 estate in Canarsie maintained its value and an

1 article in P.M. News referred to Canarsie as the
2 best kept secret in Brooklyn. Our population --
3 our voting population is a voting population who
4 maintains an interest in seeing their community
5 improve. The recent move to redistrict our
6 neighborhoods is nothing more than a move to
7 discombobulate our community. This move is
8 nothing more than a blatant motion to (inaudible)
9 our neighborhood. The resulting loss of funds
10 for our section our community will result in a
11 loss of services that we pay our taxes for and
12 deserve to continue to have.

13 I hope that you listen to the concerns of
14 the voters and residents of Canarsie and that
15 this meeting isn't just a sham formality on which
16 you continue with your plans, which will benefit
17 only a few. We have earned benefits that we
18 currently enjoy and the redistricting proposal
19 would land parts of our community with
20 neighborhoods that do not enjoy same reputation
21 as we do. We live in Canarsie and would like to
22 continue to enjoy the current benefits that we
23 have earned. We would like to remain a Canarsie
24 that is united and not represented by three
25 different Council people. Thank you.

1 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

2 The next speaker is Valeriy Savinkin, to be
3 followed by Alexander Rapaport.

4 MR. SAVINKIN: Dear members of the New York
5 City Districting Commission, my name is Larry
6 Savinkin, also known as Valeriy Savinkin. I
7 represent two community organizations: Odessa
8 Community of New York and September 11th Family
9 Group.

10 For many year, I served as an executive
11 director, and now has a president, of both
12 mentioned organizations, and I can proudly say
13 that besides myself, I represent hundreds of
14 residents of the region in south Brooklyn called
15 Little Odessa.

16 On behalf of them, I have three main reasons
17 to ask the Districting Commission to reconsider
18 its plan in relation to the boundaries of the
19 48th Council District.

20 First, Little Odessa is a region located in
21 south Brooklyn between Manhattan Beach on the
22 east and Coney Island Avenue on the west.
23 Historically, immigrants from the former Soviet
24 Union settled here for a few thousands years,
25 situated many along the shore of the ocean from

1 Manhattan Beach to West 5th Street. (Inaudible)
2 and so on, many members of the Odessa community
3 of New York reside from the Seabreeze Avenue and
4 West Brighton Avenue between Ocean Parkway and
5 West 5th Street; unfortunately, according to the
6 preliminary draft map, this area is not included
7 in the 48th District. The border between 47th
8 and 48th districts divides our community in
9 parts, diminishing its voting power.

10 Second, according to the Redistricting
11 Commission plan 48th District, there is no park
12 area at all; meantime, Asser Levy Park, located
13 between Ocean Avenue, Surf Avenue, West 5th
14 Street and Seabreeze Avenue is not just a green
15 area, but very popular, special place for the
16 Russian-speaking community in south Brooklyn.
17 For years, numerous community organizations
18 organized here various public events for tens of
19 thousands of Russian-speaking Americans. That is
20 why September 11th Family Group found this park
21 the most appropriate area for the 9/11 Memorial
22 and built it in 2005; since then, we maintained
23 the area year round and organized traditional
24 public ceremonies every year. Thousands of our
25 community members come every year to the

1 memorial. To suggest another group of common
2 interest, in this case commemoration of the
3 Russian-speaking community (inaudible). The
4 future of this park is an important issue for
5 local residents and we hope (inaudible) will help
6 us to keep this park, including the 9/11 Memorial
7 to serve various needs of Russian-speaking
8 immigrants, especially if its territory will
9 become part of the 48th District.

10 Third, one of the criteria that the
11 Commission shall apply in drawing new districts
12 is compact. City of New York Charter 2-A,
13 Section 52 1d explicitly prohibits any district
14 to be more than twice as long as its length. I
15 checked the proposed -- I am almost done. I
16 checked the proposed map of the 48th Council
17 District using Google map and found the
18 following: Its width is equal to the distance
19 between Brighton Beach and --

20 MR. ROMANO: Thank you.

21 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you very much. We
22 have to move on.

23 MR. SAVINKIN: Okay.

24 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

25 Our next speaker will be Alexander Rapaport,

1 to be followed by Descorbeth Marie Pascal.

2 Do we have Alexander Rapaport?

3 Descorbeth Marie Pascal?

4 To be followed by Elizabeth Grace Hall.

5 MS. PASCAL: Thank you, Canarsie and thank
6 you, again, Mr. Commissioner and everybody here
7 and thank you to the leaders representative and
8 thank you again for representing Canarsie once
9 again in this public hearing.

10 And I have been living in Canarsie since --

11 MR. HUM: Can you try to talk into the mike?

12 MR. OGNIENE: Take that.

13 MS. PASCAL: Thank you.

14 I have been living in Canarsie since
15 fifteen years, I grew up and I went to school, I
16 worked there in the same environment and right
17 now with the districting lines, I really don't
18 consider, I really don't approve it and do not
19 agree with it. And I want hi, voted to count in
20 my district in my community. I want to be
21 represented as my community under one City
22 Council, not under more than one. We want to
23 keep our community together and we want to
24 support the Unity Map that protects and empowers
25 our community.

1 Thank you very much.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is
3 Elizabeth Grace Hall, to be followed by Michael
4 Roberts.

5 Do we have Elizabeth Grace Hall?

6 Do we have Michael Roberts?

7 Michael Roberts, followed by Sandra Conner.

8 MR. ROBERTS: Good evening. My name is
9 Michael Roberts and I have lived and worked in
10 Brooklyn for over twenty years. I have also been
11 involved in the political arena for some time
12 now, so I know that the way that district lines
13 are drawn puts voters together in groups, some
14 voters are kept together in one district and
15 others are separated into the different
16 districts. In our system, whichever group has
17 more votes within a district usually decides
18 which representative wins.

19 Just look at New York City and Brooklyn and
20 districting boundaries that are presently drawn
21 and it tells a story of a divided, separated
22 city. African Americans, Caribbean Americans and
23 new immigrant minority districts are routinely
24 cracked, packed and diluted, so they do not
25 threaten the political (inaudible).

1 Today, City Council districts look like
2 cases of very pop art, done by a drunken artist,
3 who simply splashes paint on a piece of canvas.
4 This is the kind of gerrymandering that is at
5 work in the proposed lines of 2013. The way the
6 lines are drawn can keep a community together or
7 split it apart. Changing where they (inaudible)
8 who feel responsible for its concerns. The way
9 the lines are drawn can impact who wins an
10 election. Ultimately, the way the lines are
11 drawn can change who controls the governing body
12 and can change which policies get passed into
13 law. Many incumbents give consultants and
14 lawyers large sums of money to have their
15 district custom designed, with enough friendly
16 votes to make it extremely likely that they will
17 win the election. There is total opposition and
18 votes are wasted in this process. The presence
19 proposed lines and boundaries in Brooklyn would
20 crack districts, eliminate political challengers,
21 dilute minority and neighborhoods, waste votes,
22 split communities of interest, as in Canarsie, in
23 the 46th District. And most egregious, let
24 politicians pick and choose their voters, instead
25 of voters picking their leaders.

1 Mr. Commissioner, you said that you want to
2 get it right, please review the Unity Map
3 submitted and proposed by the Center For Law and
4 Social Justice. You don't have to approve
5 everything on the map, but the map has done a far
6 better job of adhering to the spirit and letter
7 of the New York City Charter and the Voting
8 Rights Act of 1965 than your Redistricting
9 Commission has done at this point at this time.
10 Your boundaries divide people of color and that
11 is definitely not fair.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Sandra
14 Conner, to be followed by a Mdabu Yusuf.

15 MS. CONNER: Good evening, thank you for
16 giving me this opportunity to speak and sport the
17 Unity Map from the Social Justice Law Department
18 -- Center on Social Justice.

19 We have come over here to this country and
20 not because we -- at this point, not because we
21 chose to come, we were brought over several
22 hundred years ago, and we are used to seeing a
23 great deal of injustice and I am hoping with, um,
24 perhaps with, um, some decency, you will stop
25 constantly trying to divide people of color

1 opportunity to have a power representation. We
2 don't really have it in our City Council now, we
3 can't support people who actually help our
4 communities, and we hope that you will accept
5 this map and use it when you are making your
6 decisions.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

9 Our next speaker is Mdabu Yusuf, to be
10 followed by Kobir Chowdhury.

11 MR. YUSUF: Good evening the panel of
12 redistricting process. My name is Mohammed Abu
13 Yusuf, I am from the East New York area, the
14 vicinity of between Crosby, Pennsylvania and
15 Linden Avenue and Jamaica. In this area, the
16 reality, the actual progress is so tremendous
17 that over a period of ten years, there is a big
18 population increase from the Southern Asian
19 countries, especially from Bangladesh. And the
20 majority for 85, 90 percent of the people are
21 Muslim and they have, over a period of one
22 decade, they have developed in tremendous ways in
23 various trades in trade and business, culture,
24 religious, (inaudible), every signs, and in this
25 area, mostly our Muslim people are attending, if

1 I give an example, it's a small one, in the
2 mosque we have 6 to 7 mosques we have built on
3 our own budget, not from a single penny from any
4 government authority. This mosque is, we are as
5 a Muslim attending five times a day. And in this
6 area, at least in this these five times, more
7 than 1,000 people are attending the prayer, and
8 in private prayers, we are attending altogether
9 around 10,000 people, or you can say about 8 to
10 10,000. And if you go, for example, we have a
11 religious traditions of principles that two
12 years, we are celebrating our second mosque.
13 This is our founding principle followed around
14 the globe. And if you see this, each
15 celebration, from your sight, anybody, you can go
16 and see, that every two years in the summer,
17 because the season is (inaudible) us, we are
18 going outside and celebrating that holiday and
19 that holiday indicates how many people we are
20 there.

21 So and these are the people are contributing
22 in the diversive united society of America, and
23 we have tremendous growth of young generations
24 (inaudible) who are even contributing very
25 remarkably.

1 So we would like to request the panel to
2 redistricting program that make such a district
3 whereby our community integrity will remain and
4 we can enhance our progress with the (inaudible)
5 community and with the diversity program. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

8 Our next speaker is Kobir Chowdhury, to be
9 followed by Kathleen Verna.

10 MR. CHOWDHURY: Good evening, Commission.
11 My name is Kobir Chowdhury. I am also from the
12 area of Ozone Park, City Line, East New York. I
13 could honestly say I am from all three different
14 places at the same time, because I live on 75th
15 Street, Ozone Park; I work on (inaudible) Street,
16 which is the City Line, and a big part of my
17 family lives right by East New York.

18 I am here also from a very uniformed
19 organization called Bangladeshi American
20 Democratic Council of New York. We are trying to
21 unite, you know, populations from Bangladesh to
22 unify their voice and, you know, help grow the
23 community in a positive way.

24 What I see also that you could statistically
25 see in different schools, starting from I.S. 218,

1 in Brooklyn, also in 159, P.S. 159 that is, P.S.
2 214, also in, you know, P.S. 64, you have Frank
3 Kelly, you have Elizabeth Blackwell, a tremendous
4 growth in student population. Some of the
5 neighboring schools have almost 40, 50 percent
6 student population in recent years from
7 Bangladeshi community.

8 So I won't take too much time; I respect
9 everybody else's, you know, opinion, also.

10 What I would suggest, two things: Either
11 extend Council District 37 to at least ten,
12 fifteen blocks towards District 32, which is, you
13 know, Brother Sheik had suggested to Woodhaven,
14 Jamaica or Linden Boulevard. Or, a better one,
15 just give us a district of our own with Ozone
16 Park, part of the south Ozone Park, whole City
17 Line area and part of East New York.

18 Thank you very much.

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Kathleen Verna, to be
21 followed by Henderson Wint.

22

23 MS. VERNA: Good evening, ladies and
24 gentlemen. My name is Kathleen Verna and I am
25 the member of the Remsen Church of God. I am

1 here tonight on behalf of Remsen Church of God,
2 which is a part of the 46th District. It's a
3 pleasure to testify for our district and for our
4 community.

5 We want to be united, not divided. We do
6 not want to be represented by two different City
7 Councils. We are registered voters and we would
8 like our vote to be counted for our community.
9 We want to keep our Caribbean-, African-American
10 community together, because we belong together,
11 we share the same community value, the same
12 culture and the same interest. We believe that
13 united -- we believe that unity will protect and
14 empower our community. We support the Unity Map.

15 Thank you so much and may God bless. Thank
16 you.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is
18 Henderson Wint, to be followed by Rabbi Yechezkel
19 Pikus.

20 MR. WINT: I shall now thank the Commission
21 for holding this hearing tonight for a very
22 significant cause.

23 I live in Canarsie for over thirty years. I
24 am very much involved in the community civics, a
25 member of 69th Precinct, Council, a political

1 volunteer.

2 We do not want to be represented by three
3 different City Council. Please let it be one?
4 We want to be represented to whom we choose.
5 Please let it be? We are tired of partial
6 representation or going around in circles.
7 Cutting the banyan tree. Canarsie. We want to
8 keep our Caribbean-, African-American values rich
9 and diverse with our ethnic groups and culture
10 and core values.

11 Let the record show, support the Unity Map
12 that guarantee, protect, empower. We the people
13 are within our rights to choose the American
14 dream, unity and strength. Do not divide us.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Rabbi
17 Yechezkel Pikus, to be followed by Ofelia
18 Edwards.

19 MR. PIKUS: My name is Yechezkel Pikus. I
20 am the director of Council of Jewish Agencies. I
21 represent -- the constituency that we serve is
22 found in two different districts, the 44th and
23 48th. The homogeneity of these two communities
24 has been enhanced to the influx of individuals
25 who have moved there because of its homogenous

1 nature. Culturally I would say that homogenous
2 in many respects. We are very happy with the
3 current setup, maintaining these two districts as
4 is, the 44th and 48th. We feel that it -- the
5 current situation gives us enough input into the
6 needs of the community and that our
7 representatives are sensitive to our needs and
8 will continue to be, given the makeup of these
9 communities. We want to preserve these
10 communities as they are right now and keeping
11 intact both of the 44th and 48th.

12 I thank you.

13 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

14 Our next speaker is Ofelia Edwards, to be
15 followed by Julie Osborne.

16 MS. EDWARDS: Good evening members of the
17 Commission. My name is Ofelia Edwards and I have
18 been a resident of Canarsie for approximately
19 seventeen years.

20 The redistricting proposed line does
21 Brooklyn a great disservice and cracks up the
22 entire community in ways that deny them the right
23 and opportunity to elect one of their own to City
24 Council; this is unacceptable. And just as the
25 people of the Bronx objected to the way that they

1 broke up established neighborhoods like El Barrio
2 in northern Manhattan and Brooklyn's Chinatown in
3 a way that is counter to the City Charter, we
4 object to the lines that break up Canarsie,
5 Paerdegat and Remsen in Brooklyn 46th District
6 simply to preserve the power base of a political
7 regime; this does a disservice to residents of
8 this district that have remained a united
9 community for many years. How can people who
10 have lived, voted, send their children to schools
11 in Canarsie, Flatlands and Remsen Gardens
12 suddenly find themselves out of the district and
13 joined to the community that they scarcely know
14 be fair and sensible? We urge you to reconsider
15 and take a closer look of what the effect of your
16 presence lines will have on the boundary changes
17 to the 46th District and the very lives of the
18 people who live there. We want to be able to
19 live like a community and share interests like we
20 always have. We also demand that this Commission
21 be guided by the letter, spirit of the city's
22 Charter and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. I
23 also support the Unity Map as a better
24 alternative to the Commission's present
25 boundaries that clearly will result in the

1 preserving of the political incumbency, waste
2 votes, deny the community and individuals the
3 right to participate in the democratic process
4 and create a care system based on political
5 patronage. I urge you to reconsider the lines,
6 keep the 46th Council District intact, don't
7 dilute and waste our votes and don't be
8 influenced by the political bosses.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

11 Our next speaker is Julie Osborne, to be followed
12 by Loe Fahie.

13 MS. OSBORNE: Good evening. My name is
14 Julie Osborne, I am representing the East 88th
15 Street Block Association in Canarsie. Good
16 evening, Chairman and Members of the Commission.

17 I want to put on the record my strong
18 opposition to the way that our electoral lines
19 are drawn in Brooklyn, but in particular in the
20 46th City Council District. The proposed changes
21 to the 213 map of the district cracks the black
22 and minority communities and dilute their voting
23 power, making it more impossible to elect a
24 representative that reflects the demographics of
25 the district.

1 By the United States Census 2010, members in
2 the district is 42.2 percent black, 42.6 percent
3 white, with over 10,000 Asians and 11,000
4 Hispanics; therefore, this qualifies the 46th
5 Council District for designation of a
6 minority-majority district and this satisfies the
7 Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

8 The present lines dilute and crack the
9 district and so violate the Voting Rights Act. A
10 better alternative is the Unity Map that was
11 drawn by the Center of Law and Social Justice;
12 while not perfect, I believe that this map will
13 keep intact communities of interest in the 46th
14 District.

15 Our minority population grew by about 1
16 percent and this demographic change demands a
17 revision of the present lines so that the
18 district reflects the change.

19 I also urge this commission to recommit self
20 to a transparent process. Extensive public
21 input, and a recognition of neighborhoods and
22 communities of interest in this redistricting
23 process. These lines should not be drawn to
24 guarantee that one ethnic or racial group
25 unfairly controls political power over the

1 majority because of the geographic gerrymandering
2 and the bias input from the Brooklyn's political
3 bosses with their own agendas.

4 In conclusion, the present lines leave much
5 to be desired, and it is my hope that you redraw
6 lines in keeping with the letter of the Voting
7 Rights Act of 1965. I also --

8 Thank you.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

10 The next speaker is Loe Fahie, to be
11 followed by Gary Schlesinger.

12 MS. FAHIE: Good evening. Sorry, I just
13 found out about this a couple of hours ago, so I
14 am not going to be as well versed in statistics.
15 But I do thank you for this forum, and I hope it
16 actually does something.

17 I am here to strongly propose that the
18 eastern border of the 36th District is extended
19 to Saratoga Avenue, not stopping at Malcolm X or,
20 as it proposed, at Patchen Avenue. As part of
21 Community Board 3, we are hoping not to be
22 divided from our community. It makes sense
23 topographically, stylistically, architecturally,
24 historically for us to be a part of our Community
25 Board.

1 Currently, we are within the 41st District,
2 instead of the 31st, which doesn't quite make
3 sense to me. The eastern area of Bed-Stuy should
4 be adjoined with the rest of its neighborhood,
5 from where I stand. We have about redistributed
6 or displaced into Ocean Hill; which, having grown
7 up in Bed-Stuy, I actually hadn't heard of until
8 a few years ago. So I would love to be a part of
9 my own community.

10 Even after moving away to various
11 neighborhoods, in all of your districts, I have
12 come back to Bed-Stuy, I have seen a lot of
13 progress and I am a part of it and I would like
14 to be not be severed from. We deserve a
15 harmonious neighborhood that corrects this
16 inexplicable, or it probably can be explained,
17 but illogical severing of our community, as we
18 all strive to grow and improve and preserve the
19 neighborhood we love, which is all of Bed-Stuy.

20 Having attended our district's monthly
21 public meeting, it seem that we are more of a
22 square peg in a round hole. So, once again, I
23 reiterate, I would love to see that our district
24 borders somehow extends to what is officially the
25 border, historically, at the least on some

1 accounts, Saratoga Avenue.

2 The Districting Commission has finally seen
3 it fit to redraw these lines, so this is why I am
4 here today, to hope that you would consider to
5 extend that border.

6 Let's see.

7 One other thing I would like to say, fifty
8 seconds left, is a common theme I have been
9 seeing today is unity, and we feel that we
10 deserve that unity within our community, within
11 our neighborhood. This is not about -- I am not
12 here about race, I am not here about class or
13 gender, I care about unifying a community, one
14 that have been severed by just a few blocks and
15 not necessarily allowed to be fully a part of the
16 progress that we are trying to make as we moved
17 forward.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Gary Schlesinger, to be
21 followed by -- it's difficult for me to read this
22 name, but I believe it says Avrohom Icahn
23 (phonetic).

24 MR. SCHLESINGER: Distinguished Members, I
25 appear before you as a representative of the role

1 of Jewish community, which is represented at the
2 33rd and 35th Council District. My name is Gary
3 Schlesinger. I am the executive board chairman
4 of the United Jewish Community Advocacy Relations
5 and Enrichment a/k/a UJcare, which represents
6 thousands of Orthodox Jewish represents from
7 Williamsburg, Clinton Hill, Fort Green and
8 Bed-Stuy.

9 As a child of immigrants and Holocaust
10 survivors, I can only say that only the United
11 States we have a chance to speak openly to
12 lawmakers, who right the laws, implement policy
13 and are ready and happy to hear what we have to
14 say.

15 Over sixty years have past since our
16 parents, immigrants, many from Eastern Europe,
17 arrived here in this blessed country after
18 fleeing the Holocaust during World War II. They
19 built from scratch new institutions and poured
20 millions upon millions of dollars into schools,
21 synagogues, community centers. We are continuing
22 to do exactly that until this day.

23 As of today, our new younger generation want
24 to stay in the same community, because of that,
25 we are one of the fastest growing community in

1 the United States. We are very worried that this
2 will change and we will be diluted and our
3 influences as a community will be diminished. As
4 one community, we share the same culture, same
5 religious beliefs in our way of life. There is a
6 certain ethnic sensitivity that should be
7 considered when the lines are drawn because there
8 is so many special needs.

9 Some political forces proposed in the
10 current draft to create a so-called super Jewish
11 district, which will change the current City
12 Council district. We are currently represented
13 in two districts, the 33rd and the 35th. We
14 believe it is better for our Orthodox Jewish
15 community to leave the old lines untouched. It
16 provides us with an additional Council member.
17 In addition to Council Member Stephen Levin, from
18 the 33rd Council District we also have Council
19 Member Tish James, from the 35th Council
20 District.

21 A super Jewish District will dilute
22 community strength and will choke our voice to be
23 more effectively heard within the City Council.
24 We need two Council members. And we love our
25 Council Member Tish James, who has been a great

1 voice to our community. It is important to have
2 our voices heard. We believe we will prosper we
3 will continue to raise our children as great
4 American citizen.

5 Please look at these district lines fairly.
6 Please don't changed our current district lines.
7 Let our voices be heard and not the voice of the
8 former disgraced assemblyman who wants to change
9 our district lines for his own political agenda.

10 Thank you very much for listening.

11 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Avrohom
12 Icahn, to be followed by Marina Yelsky.

13 MR. KAHN: I thank you so much. Hi, name is
14 Avrohom Kahn from -- director of COJO of Flatbush
15 and I am speaking on behalf of many, many
16 constituents who have e-mailed me, have told me
17 their personal interests and they are, especially
18 in the Flatbush neighborhood, Midwood
19 neighborhood, Marine Park neighborhood, they
20 would like to keep the 44th and the 48th
21 Districts the same, the way it was by their --
22 the way it was prior to this and they would like
23 to make sure that David Greenfield will be left
24 in taking care of the issues of the Flatbush
25 neighborhood, of the Coney Island area, and --

1 where he was taken out of, that should be given
2 back to David Greenfield.

3 It is important, I hear a lot of the
4 different things that are going on here tonight,
5 my constituents are stating that they are very
6 happy with how they are being represented and
7 they want to keep that strength and they want to
8 grow with that strength and they want their
9 neighborhoods to continue growing, so we would
10 like to keep it the way it is, the 44th, the
11 48th, and let David Greenfield have back that
12 area that was his in the past.

13 Thank you very much, and I hope you take my
14 recommendation.

15 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

16 MR. ROMANO: We are going to be take a
17 five-minute recess. We have about going for
18 about two hours.

19 We are adjourned for five minutes.

20 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Marina
21 Yelsky, to be followed by Jody Celauro.

22 MS. YELSKY: Good morning, ladies and
23 gentlemen. My name is Marina Yelsky. I came
24 from Canarsie, part of District 46. Thank you to
25 let me talk.

1 I have a business in Canarsie and this
2 community I would like to not divide it, I would
3 like it to be united. We don't want to be
4 represented by different City Council's. We go
5 to the same church, we share in the same
6 community and we want to be registered by only
7 one City Council, we want to keep our community
8 together. Please support Unity Map for our
9 community. Thank you very much to let me speak.
10 Thank you.

11 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Jody Celauro, to be
13 followed by Moshe Zakheim.

14 MR. CELAURO: Thank you, Committee. My name
15 is Jody Celauro. I am from Canarsie, Brooklyn.
16 I have a lifelong stake in that neighborhood. I
17 am actually a dinosaur from that neighborhood,
18 because I have been there all my life. We have a
19 fifty-three-year-old family business still on
20 Avenue L, in Canarsie, and I have been civically
21 active and community active for many, many
22 decades.

23 What I would like to say to you all is you
24 have heard a good segment of this group tonight,
25 those represented by Canarsie, and you have heard

1 the fervor, you have heard the passion, you have
2 hear the way they feel in their hearts about
3 breaking up this neighborhood.

4 For those of you who are familiar, or for
5 those of you who are not, we have an enclave, we
6 have a little suburb in the heart of Brooklyn.
7 We are physically, physically separated by water,
8 by the Paerdegat Basin, by Jamaica Bay and by
9 Fresh Creek from the rest of the neighborhood,
10 from the rest of the borough; as a result of
11 that, we have always had a unique status, we have
12 always had a unique life.

13 Now, throughout all of the decades that I
14 have been in the home improvement business, I
15 have been in thousands of people's homes in that
16 neighborhood, those of the original residents
17 from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, those who are
18 there now, and the one common bound, the one
19 common bound that they all share is the desire to
20 live in a quiet, peaceful suburban-like setting,
21 have a nice life for themselves, send their kids
22 to a good school and to thrive in that community.
23 Our neighborhood is quite different, and as a
24 result of that, to rip representation away from
25 Canarsie is to rip at the very core, to rip at

1 the sole of that neighborhood. I know what it's
2 like, I know the way it's been and I know the way
3 it is now. We cannot do that. We must maintain
4 the uniqueness, the shopping centers, the
5 schools, the family-oriented type of neighborhood
6 that we have.

7 And I ask you one thing, everyone that has
8 spoken tonight has talked about why we shouldn't
9 change, why we shouldn't redistrict, but nobody
10 here really knows what the reasons or the basis
11 are for doing it in the first place.

12 I submit to you that those reasons are not
13 authentic, yet they are politically driven for
14 self-serving considerations, and that is the
15 worst type of decisions that could be made to
16 affect the people of any neighborhood, and let
17 alone the people of Canarsie. So I humbly stand
18 before you today and I ask you to consider that
19 special magical neighborhood that has always
20 existed at the southeastern end of Brooklyn, that
21 neighborhood that we call Canarsie. Thank you.

22 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

23 Our next speaker is Moshe Zakheim, to be
24 followed by Dawne Courtney.

25 MR. ZAKHEIM: Good evening. Thank you force

1 opportunity to address the committee.

2 My name is Moshe Zakheim. I serve as the
3 president of COJO, Council of Jewish
4 Organizations of Flatbush. In addition, I serve
5 as the cochair of Ohel Children's Home and a
6 number of other nonprofit organizations, all for
7 the purpose of helping those that are less
8 fortunate.

9 Simply, if the goal of this committee is to
10 provide support, if it is to help the community,
11 then why change it? If it's not broken, why fix
12 it? Our goal, and COJO is there to provide
13 services to the community. It has been doing so
14 very, very well respected for many, many year.
15 How does it provide funding? It gets it from the
16 government. If we are going to start dividing up
17 or, excuse me, making that one super one
18 organization -- super one district and we are
19 going to hurt ourselves, we are going to hurt the
20 people, not ourselves. We are going to hurt the
21 people.

22 I heard the terminology used as a super
23 Jewish district, let me tell you what to say, as
24 we say, it's safe to say that when a person has a
25 lot of the assets, you don't put it in one basic,

1 you don't invest it in one area, you invest it in
2 different areas.

3 Here, we have needs for the Flatbush
4 community, for the Borough Park community, from
5 Marine Park, the service will be provided even
6 more so and greater if it is maintained the way
7 it has been doing now. Let the request from the
8 committee is to allow it to continue, to maintain
9 it as it is, it has been providing very, very
10 good services, we are providing excellent
11 services, this community, this organization that
12 I am involved in, other organizations and we
13 would like to continue that way.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

16 Our next speaker is Dawne Courtney, to be
17 followed by Anne Marie Piene (phonetic).

18 MS. COURTNEY: Good evening, Members of the
19 Council. My name is Dawne Courtney Newman
20 (phonetic).

21 MS. BRAGG: Could you please peak into the
22 mike?

23 MS. COURTNEY: Sorry.

24 Good evening, Members of the Council. My
25 name is Dawne Courtney Newman. I am a resident

1 of Canarsie and the 46th Council District. I
2 have been a resident there for over thirty years.
3 When I was a child, I was brought to America and
4 the first place I lived was in Canarsie. My aunt
5 has been a resident there for over -- from since
6 the '60s. And I attended school there. I
7 attended South Shore High School. I left
8 Canarsie, went over to CUNY Hunter College, I
9 attended Hunter College. And then later Columbia
10 University, where I have a social work degree.

11 Now, I own property in Canarsie and I have
12 recently heard of this redistricting last week,
13 so it's sort of like rushed, I am not really
14 prepared, so I am trying to voice my concern here
15 today and thank you for listening to me.

16 As a result, I now own property in Canarsie,
17 and I have a small business there, as well, on
18 Rockaway Parkway. One of my concerns is the
19 bullying of politicians to stop, we want you all
20 to stop cracking, you know, Canarsie. We need to
21 have one Canarsie with representation of our
22 choice and this change will bring about long-term
23 negative -- a long-term negative impact on
24 Canarsie. I -- instead of redistricting, we want
25 more businesses, safer streets, to maintain the

1 parks, maintain the schools and we also need
2 strong representation to improve and strengthen
3 our community instead of weakening it. We would
4 like to -- we like -- we like the 46th Council
5 District to remain as it is now, so we would like
6 for you to not redistrict the 46th Council
7 District.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.
10 Our next speaker is Anne Marie Piene, or Prene
11 (phonetic).

12 No? Okay.

13 Possibly Anne Marie Pierre?

14 Any Anne Maries around?

15 All right. Michele Foster or --

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Luard.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Pardon?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Michele Luard.

19 MS. LUARD: I don't think I need the mike.

20 Can you hear me?

21 I would like you to take --

22 No. You need that?

23 MR. HACKWORTH: Yes.

24 MS. LUARD: Okay.

25 I would like you to take notes of what I am

1 saying, because, to me sometimes, you are not
2 paying attention, okay?

3 I live in the 46th District, I would like it
4 to remain that way. Here are my reasons: One,
5 with this rezoning, you are moving eight -- at
6 least eight schools into East New York. East New
7 York is densely populated with schools,
8 low-functioning schools. District 19 schools are
9 closed every go-around, okay. Now, you are going
10 to expose my kids to the same level of education
11 because I am now going to be a part of that
12 district. I do not want that. I would like my
13 kids to continue being a part of the 46th
14 District. Okay, that is one.

15 Two, property value, the value of our
16 properties will be devalued almost automatically.
17 We don't want that.

18 The third reason, our safety, I respect and
19 I love the representation in District 42, I have
20 nothing against them, but we need our
21 representation to continue the way it is, we need
22 the money for our schools to remain the way it
23 is.

24 Based on what I have heard tonight, there is
25 not one person who has accepted this map;

1 therefore, if every one of us, if our request is
2 granted, then the maps will remain the way it is,
3 or at least be done the way the other sets of
4 people have it.

5 My last request is, the next time this
6 meeting is going to be held, I think we would
7 like to know. I am a part of a block
8 association, we were not aware of it, nobody
9 knew. I was told this afternoon. I came here to
10 find out, you know, what exactly is happening. I
11 would like it publicized, that is the only way
12 it's going to be democratic. All right. Thank
13 you.

14

15 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

16 Is there a Michelle, who is here on behalf
17 of Mercedes Narcisse?

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Michelle left.

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Okay, thank you.

20 Our next speaker will be Antonio Reynoso,
21 followed by Marie Olivie Jeune.

22 MR. REYNOSO: First, my name as Antonio
23 Reynoso and I am here on behalf of Council Member
24 Diana Reyna, and I just want to say I want to
25 thank you guys for taking the time out of your

1 lives to be on this Council, and I know how tough
2 it is to be here as volunteers and try to do this
3 job, so I thank you and commend you for the work
4 you are doing.

5 I am here, a little tardy, I am here with
6 many community members. The reason I am late is
7 because we just came from a rally in which we
8 were fighting discrimination and perpetuated
9 segregation in a portion of our district called
10 the Broadway Triangle. So that is why we were
11 tardy, we were in a rally with over two hundred
12 people and it was very successful.

13 On behalf of the 34th Council District, I
14 would like to thank you for your time, effort and
15 dedication in ensuring that new Council District
16 lines accurately represent the current and
17 ever-dynamic communities of New York City.

18 As you are well aware, the redistricting
19 process requires a delicate balance between
20 objectivity and awareness; the process must amend
21 the lines according to the new census data, but
22 at the same time, protect the community
23 boundaries that have developed over generations
24 and are defined by families, business owners,
25 places of worship and community-based

1 organizations.

2 After a review of the proposed lines for the
3 34th District, I am pleased to say that the
4 Commission has preserved many of the historical
5 lines that define the Williamsburg, Bushwick and
6 richer community.

7 Lines for Los Sures, or the south side of
8 Williamsburg, will not change, according to the
9 proposal, which is a welcome acknowledgement of
10 Los Sures's perseverance in the face of
11 significant gentrification along its borders.

12 I would also like to highlight the inclusion
13 of the Broadway Triangle into the 34th District.
14 It is no surprise to anyone familiar with the
15 Broadway Triangle that it remains a hotly
16 contested and controversial area. I am glad to
17 see that the Commission has recognized the need
18 to include the Broadway Triangle in a
19 majority-minority district.

20 In the case of a series of city housing
21 projects located in the Broadway Triangle, the
22 Manhattan Supreme Court found that the proposed
23 developers planned to construct buildings that
24 would have perpetrated discrimination against
25 Latino and black families and, thus, underserved

1 the local community. Having a majority-minority
2 district represent this area will help guarantee
3 that the residents, who have been marginalized
4 for decades, have a voice in local policy
5 matters.

6 The area of concern regarding the lines in
7 the 34th District is the souther portion of
8 Meeker Avenue, where several buildings,
9 including, but not limited to, 72, 74 and 76
10 Richardson Street and 600 and 605 Metropolitan
11 Avenue, have residents that are predominantly
12 Latino. The exclusion of the residents from the
13 34th District leaves them vulnerable to
14 gentrification and, ultimately, displacement.
15 Despite the significant changes that the
16 development of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg
17 waterfront have brought to north Brooklyn, the
18 34th District has been able to preserve the
19 cultural identities of many different ethnic and
20 racial groups; Italians, Latinos, blacks, Asians
21 and other residents. Given the exceptionally
22 high growth rate experience in the 33rd District,
23 the fact that the 33rd District has -- and the
24 fact that the 33rd District has a larger
25 population than the 34th District, the area south

1 of Meeker Avenue should be kept intact and
2 represented by the 34th District.

3 Once again, thank you for your invaluable
4 services to the city and I look forward to
5 working with the Commission and the constituents
6 of the 34th District to ensure that the new
7 district lines best represent the community's
8 interest.

9 Thank you very much.

10 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

11 The next speaker is Marie Olivie Jeune.

12 No? Okay.

13 Wayne, whose last name is eligible, from
14 Community Gardens.

15 Wayne?

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: To be followed by Raheem
18 Jones.

19 WAYNE: Good evening, distinguished panel
20 Commission.

21 Truly, I am just here representing a
22 community garden. I work with an organization
23 that is trying to spearhead a movement to bring
24 more resources around sustainability, food and
25 eliminating food deserts in the community, and I

1 am speaking on behalf of the community
2 represented in my -- in that area, the 42
3 District, which is predominantly African-American
4 and Latino, and truly I find out that there is a
5 political climate to suppress the vote and it's
6 unprecedented nationwide. And when you hear that
7 there has been some disparity in redistricting,
8 it raises a red flag that many should address.
9 So I am just somewhat concerned and I just have a
10 few points that I would like to bring to the
11 Commission's awareness, when you make a decision
12 regarding redistricting, and one of them is
13 census disparity. There has been some report
14 that it was flawed and I would like to know if
15 the Commission has made some allowances for any
16 flaw counting regarding the census.

17 And in light of the political climate around
18 voter suppression, it is truly and unprecedented
19 steps -- there have been unprecedented steps to
20 disenfranchise a certain community, so I just
21 want to make sure that the Commission is aware of
22 these things.

23 In terms of population growth, you know,
24 it's simple matter of science, I know my 12-year
25 old son, I gave him a glass of milk and we were

1 doing a study of volume, when the glass starts to
2 overflow, it pours over and I asked him what do
3 you do, he said, oh, you get another glass and
4 you fill it. So when I see the Commission sees a
5 population increase, in instead of getting
6 another glass, they want to chop it up, I truly
7 wish you could take some advise from my son
8 regarding this, and I truly hope that you
9 consider the diversity, New York is well known
10 for its diversity, Brooklyn should be a model of
11 that, so I really would like those to consider
12 the Unity Map in terms of implementing that
13 proposal to express the diversity of this
14 borough.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

17 The next speaker is Raheem Jones, to be
18 followed by Stanley Scott.

19 MR. JONES: Good evening, Commission.

20 I lived in Brooklyn all my life, over a half
21 a century, I lived in several sections of
22 Brooklyn, and what I have noticed over the many
23 decades is that many things in our neighborhoods
24 where African Americans live have been cut out,
25 cut down.

1 I don't know how long all of y'all have been
2 on this Commission, but I could remember back in
3 the '80s, in the Crown Heights section, there was
4 a certain enclave or a certain ethnicity which of
5 course was not people of color that was drawn and
6 this was all done illegally, so I just want y'all
7 to know this is new districting that you have for
8 Crown Heights, District 36, that we are not with
9 it, we don't approve of it, and we want
10 everything to stay the same as it was. You know,
11 we want things to change for the better.

12 I mean, we need more schools, we need more
13 institutions, we need more training facilities,
14 so this is what the people in Crown Heights,
15 Brooklyn need, okay?

16 I could tell you for example, you closed a
17 hospital called St. Mary's, that hospital has
18 been closed now for almost seven years and it is
19 sitting right there and it isn't doing anything.
20 I mean, this was a hospital that was needed in
21 the neighborhood, and you are talking about
22 closing more things, so we definitely don't
23 appreciate it, we would like to see the new Unity
24 Map that was drawn by the Center for Law and
25 Social Justice be approved. This is what I have

1 to say.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Stanley Scott, to be
5 followed by Arisma or Arisha Theodore.

6 Do we have Stanley Scott?

7 Arisha or Arisma Theodore?

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Right here.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: To be followed by Sylvia
10 Whiteside.

11 MR. THEODORE: First of all, thank you for
12 allowing me to testify.

13 And I want to thank all of the people who
14 are here, thank you for coming out, because it
15 shows that we do know the importance of this
16 process.

17 First of all, what happens that the proposed
18 lines of the 46th District harm and dilute the
19 political power of our Canarsie community, as
20 most of you are well aware, I am sure.

21 The proposed lines break up Canarsie into
22 three different districts; 42 and 45th District.

23 This matter pertains more so to quality of
24 life than anything else. Most of us moved into
25 Canarsie with certain expectations and now we

1 find ourselves being drawn into the lines of
2 other districts that do not share our core
3 values.

4 Further, I strongly believe that property
5 values that have already dropped due to the
6 economic downturn will further drop in light of
7 what is being proposed right now.

8 The things that we are accorded certain
9 benefits that other communities do not currently
10 because we have worked hard for them and we have
11 earned them. I don't believe the districts that
12 we have, we have been lumped into can adequately
13 represent the Canarsie area, as we differ in many
14 ways, including our core values; I, therefore,
15 that we revert to the old lines or support the
16 Unity Map lines that were proposed.

17 Thank you very much.

18 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

19 Our next speaker will be Sylvia Whiteside,
20 to be followed by Josette Papailler.

21 MS. WHITESIDE: Good evening, Commissioners
22 and good evening, my fellow Brooklynites.

23 My name is Sylvia Whiteside and as a past
24 president of a Bayview Houses in Canarsie, a
25 resident of this development for over

1 fifty-five years, and a member of Community Board
2 18, I am requesting that our development be
3 included in the councilmanic district which is
4 46th with the rests of Canarsie and not excluded,
5 as we were the last time. We were included in
6 District 42, which covers East New York and
7 Brownsville. And Canarsie is in the far eastern
8 part of Brooklyn and Canarsie. So we had to skip
9 over Seaview Village and we are by the Belt
10 Parkway and we zoned that way. Our residents --

11 Bayview Houses is a development that is
12 located in Canarsie, the boundaries are Rockaway
13 Parkway, Seaview Avenue, East 102nd Street and
14 Shore Parkway, it was open in September 1955 and
15 has a multiethnic population of 400,100 families.
16 Our residents provide economic stability for this
17 community, they are an important part of the
18 fabric that makes Canarsie a desirable community
19 to live in. The children go to the local schools
20 and families are members of the local religious
21 institutions, and some participate in local civic
22 organizations. Our Council man was supportive of
23 us; however, it was very difficult for him, since
24 we were so far away and most of his constituents
25 resided in Brownsville and East New York.

1 The responsibility of the elected official
2 for Canarsie should provide us with assistance
3 that was done prior to the current redistricting
4 ten years ago.

5 According to Ramon Martinez, a community
6 historian and founder of Canarsie History Museum,
7 New York started in 1524 in Canarsie, thirty-two
8 years after Columbus came to America. It was
9 settled by the Canarsie native American Indians.
10 Their burial ground is located on Rockaway
11 Parkway, Shore Parkway, East 95th Street and
12 Schenck Avenue. In 1667, Canarsie, along with
13 Flatlands, was chartered as a township. How can
14 Commission violate the Charter and divide that
15 historic community? So we are asking you to
16 follow along with historic values and to support
17 the Unity Map.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

20 Our next speaker is Josette Papailler, to be
21 followed by Maxine Gordon.

22 MS. PAPAILLER: Good evening. My name is
23 Josette Papailler and I have been living in
24 Canarsie since 1983 and I am a retired lab
25 technician and I used to own a business in

1 Rockaway Parkway; therefore, living so long in
2 Canarsie and growing my three children in
3 Canarsie and I would like to ask the
4 Commissioners please do not keep us apart?
5 Because we have children going to school, we have
6 grandchildren growing up, by dividing us, that is
7 not going to solve anything. Because we want to
8 stay united and we want more work to be done in
9 the community. So we want the community to stay
10 the same, not divided.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

13 Our next speaker is Maxine Gordon, to be
14 followed by Ola Alabi.

15 MS. GORDON: Good evening, everyone. It is
16 my pleasure to be here this evening to testify
17 for the 46th District and my community.

18 I am a homeowner and have lived in Canarsie
19 for nearly eighteen years, I have five children
20 that have grown up in Canarsie and all of them
21 attend P.S. 115, I have two children that still
22 attend 115.

23 At P.S. 115, teachers, parents and community
24 leaders have worked hard to make 115 what it is
25 today, a community school.

1 Ms. Annie, the crossing guard at Avenue N
2 has been crossing children for over twenty years,
3 she is now in her eighties. Everyone knows
4 Ms. Annie and knows that she will see that theirs
5 children are safely crossed to school.

6 Many children have graduated from 115, many
7 are now adults, but yet they are still able to
8 come back to 115 and see their favorite teachers,
9 because they are still there.

10 What is going to happen if we become part of
11 the 46th District?

12 Getting funding in any school is difficult
13 enough, but our teachers, PTA parents and
14 community leaders work hard to get what our
15 children need. Without proper funding, 115 will
16 lose some of their great teachers. Many of them
17 have been teaching there for over twenty-five
18 years. There are even teachers that went to
19 school as children at 115 and have come back
20 there to teach. What does this tell you about
21 our community?

22 We want to be represented by one City
23 Council, not by three different City Council. We
24 want to stay as a unified community because we
25 share the same community values and culture.

1 Please support the Unity Map that protects and
2 empowers our community.

3 Thank you four allowing me to testify
4 regarding the redistricting proposal in my
5 community.

6 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

7 Our next speaker is Ola Alabi, to be
8 followed by Renee Cassell.

9 MS. ALABI: Good evening, Chair Carl Hum and
10 to the entire Commission. It's good to see all
11 of you and for the work you do and it's good to
12 see all of the residents of Brooklyn.

13 I just want to quickly comment on the
14 proposed or the draft map of the 35th Council
15 district. I -- generally speaking, I think it's
16 a very good map, because I think there was a real
17 attempt for neighborhood continuity and to keep
18 communities together. I just have -- I
19 specifically want to commend you on including
20 Lafayette Gardens Public Housing in the 35th
21 district, because it's a housing development that
22 has benefited largely from resources in the 35th,
23 although currently it's located in the 36th
24 District, so I thought that was a good change
25 that you all did. In particular, to balance the

1 demographics of the district. I thought that was
2 good.

3 I just have one critique and that is in the
4 southern portion of the district, usually Empire
5 Boulevard was the southernmost boundary of the
6 district, now it goes over to Lincoln Road, and
7 you know, I just think that after Empire
8 Boulevard that, you know, that is Prospect
9 Lefferts Gardens, a whole other community, and I
10 think that we probably could serve the 35th
11 better if we included more of Crown Heights on
12 the east and left of the boundary at Empire
13 Boulevard. I think it's only fair that Prospect
14 Lefferts Gardens remain one community, rather
15 than trying to divide it up amongst several
16 blocks to the south.

17 So those are my critiques. Generally
18 speaking, it's a good. That's my critique.

19 Yes?

20 MS. BRAGG: What is your suggestion for the
21 Crown Heights boundary?

22 MS. ALABI: I think at one point you stop at
23 Montgomery, is it?

24 MS. BRAGG: I think so. I'm sorry, my map4.

25 MS. ALABI: When you move over to the east?

1 MS. BRAGG: My map does not have the streets
2 very well.

3 So you are saying move it further to the
4 east?

5 MS. ALABI: Yes. But also move it south to
6 Empire and I think it should stop at Empire
7 Boulevard.

8 MS. WOLFE: Stop at Empire Boulevard?

9 MS. ALABI: Yes.

10 Thank you so much.

11 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Renee Cassell, to be
13 followed by Sam Rubin.

14 MS. CASSELL: Good evening, Brooklynites and
15 good evening, the Commission.

16 My name is Renee Cassell and I am -- I was
17 born and raised in Manhattan and once I moved to
18 New Rochelle and then I moved to Brooklyn. I am
19 a Brooklynite. I claim it. I love Brooklyn and
20 I love being in the 40th district.

21 I have lived in Prospect Lefferts Gardens
22 neighborhood for over twelve years, I picked this
23 neighborhood because of its historical value, we
24 -- I am also a member of the 100 Sterling Street
25 Block Association. This community is

1 distinguished by its historical and national
2 landmark status in 1979 by the City of New York
3 and again in 2009. Also included in the national
4 landmark status, which we received in 1992. It's
5 with great pride that I am included in this
6 historical community.

7 I just want to piggyback on what the young
8 lady said, the district ends -- with the new
9 lines, it would include my street, which is
10 Sterling Street, it would include Lefferts Street
11 and it would include Lincoln Road into the 35th
12 District, I don't want that, I want to stay in
13 the 40th district, where we are already in the
14 historical Lefferts Gardens and Lefferts Manor.
15 We have -- we are included in Flatbush. And
16 that's why I moved to this area. I moved into
17 this area for those reasons. I have the Ocean
18 Avenue, it goes all the way to Empire Boulevard,
19 and, you know, we have a big community and I just
20 want to stay in the 40th district.

21 Also, because of the housing, the sales of
22 houses in that neighborhood, when we are now
23 going to be in the 35th district, it changes what
24 our value of our homes would be, and I want to
25 keep the value of my home. I am not against 35th

1 district, but I would love to stay with the rest
2 of my community, and I have raised my son since
3 he was four and a half months old in my house and
4 I intend to stay there. Our district lines have
5 always included Empire Boulevard.

6 Okay. Thank you for listening to me and I
7 hope that you -- I hope that you do keep it the
8 way it is, please. Thank you.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

10 Our next speaker is Sam Rubin, to be
11 followed by Ora Burke.

12 Sam Rubin?

13 Ora Burke?

14 Ora Burke, to be followed by Orlando Aupont.

15 MS. BURKE: Thank you. Good evening,
16 Commission Members and my fellow Brooklynites.

17 I am just briefly going to add to what the
18 young lady just said. I also am a member of the
19 40th District, I have lived there -- I am born
20 and raised in Brooklyn and I have lived in
21 Flatbush for the last twenty-one years, I hope to
22 live there probably for the next twenty years or
23 so.

24 To add, I live on Rugby Road, which is
25 missing from the map, but it also -- I am a part

1 of that historic landmark community, which also
2 includes Midwood, Maple Street, Lincoln Road,
3 Lefferts Avenue, Sterling Street, Empire
4 Boulevard, we are one historic landmark
5 community; I do not want to see parts of it
6 annexed off to become part of the 35th District,
7 which I do respect, Prospect Heights and Crown
8 Heights, but we have our unique communities and I
9 do want to remain a part of that community. I do
10 not want to find myself on the next go-around
11 annexed off to another neighboring community. I
12 love our Flatbush, greater Flatbush area and we
13 are Caribbean American, African, African
14 Americans, with our minorities and recent
15 newcomers and we are growing and strengthening
16 and we are a vibrant community and we want to
17 stay intact, so we would like keep us together,
18 put my street back on your map, so I stay there,
19 and to also, I support the Unity Map, I would
20 like you to support it as well, which would
21 reflect our unique communities and districts.

22 Thank you and good night.

23 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

24 Our next speaker is Orlando Aupont.

25 Orlando Aupont?

1 (Audience member speaking.)

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Yes, okay.

3 Marty Needleman?

4 Okay, so it will be Marty Needleman, to be
5 followed by Orlando Aupont.

6 MR. NEEDELMAN: Thank you for hearing us.
7 Thank you for your hard work in preparing the
8 proposed redistricting.

9 I speak, in part, on behalf of the Broadway
10 community, Broadway Triangle Community Coalition,
11 which is a coalition I think you have heard of
12 before of forty community groups that represents
13 really the extensive communities surrounding
14 Woodhull hospital and that area, and the Pfizer
15 plant, and the area that joins both southern
16 Williamsburg and northern Bedford-Stuyvesant.
17 And a group -- those forty groups and that
18 coalition has been excluded, as you have heard
19 described before, from the process of planning
20 for the Broadway Triangle, which is a very large
21 area, which has been undeveloped, which it was
22 originally geared up for commercial and
23 industrial development and which is happening
24 many other places in Brooklyn, including the
25 Williamsburg waterfront. Areas that are

1 considered to be dead for commercial and
2 industrial development really aren't and are ripe
3 for multi-development, but because the value of
4 housing is becoming so great in those areas for a
5 variety of reasons, developers prefer building
6 residential housing to promoting the industrial
7 work.

8 People said the Brooklyn waterfront is dead,
9 but the Brooklyn Navy Yard is booming right next
10 door. So I think there is questions about that.
11 But the fundamental problem, the fundamental
12 point I wanted to make here is we strongly
13 support the redistricting plan that you put
14 forward, in general, in part, because it
15 consolidates in terms of 34th Councilmanic
16 District because it's a decent and very rational
17 design for that district.

18 But with respect to the Broadway Triangle,
19 it is critical, because it incorporates -- as
20 Antonio Reynoso said, it incorporates the Latino
21 community in the Broadway Triangle area and their
22 representative would have an opportunity to play
23 a much greater role in the planning for that
24 area, which is a mixed area, the area is
25 multiethnic.

1 But on one side, it's been exclusionary, and
2 the City, for a variety of reasons, for political
3 reasons, really, has developed a plan that is
4 exclusionary, has massive racial impacts, but
5 it's exclusionary on a much larger level,
6 including a significant part of the Jewish
7 community as well. And our coalition, which is a
8 broad coalition, which is the first coalition,
9 really needs the involvement of the
10 representation of the 34th Councilmanic District
11 in order to develop a plan for the Broadway
12 Triangle, which is a very significant part of the
13 area, in order to have, really, a much more
14 diverse and appropriate result.

15 I won't go into detail, but it's incredible
16 how shocking how government, the city government,
17 not some private crazy landlord, but the city
18 government and the Housing Authority has been
19 involved since 1964 in shocking examples of
20 racial quotas, strict racial quotas, that have
21 been maintained for thirty years, forty years,
22 and that remain having a dramatic impact even on
23 the current situation as has been found by the
24 (inaudible) in 2011.

25 And so we strongly support the plan that you

1 have for the 34th Councilmanic District.

2 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

3 Do we have Orlando Aupont?

4 No okay.

5 Fred Baer, to be followed by Henri-Robert
6 Maguet.

7 MR. ROBERT: Good evening. My name is Fred
8 Baer and from the Board of the Fiske Terrace
9 Association.

10 Fiske Terrace comprises the southern portion
11 of Victorian Flatbush. And right now our
12 neighborhood, which is part of the Fiske
13 Terrace-Midwood Park historic district, is
14 bisected into two councilmanic districts and
15 unfortunately the proposed plan does not address
16 that.

17 That line runs down East 17th Street, which
18 means the 45th District now covers about
19 two-thirds of our neighborhood. This makes it
20 very, very difficult for us to both elect true
21 advocates for the needs of our neighborhood, plus
22 it makes it difficult for citizens to come and
23 get involved with government and deal with things
24 like capital projects or quality-of-life issues,
25 because we have two separate Council Members that

1 we have to deal with.

2 We request that that line be limited and
3 that our neighborhood be included in the 45th
4 District, which would make sure that the
5 commonality of interest in both sides of that
6 that artificial line would be represented by a
7 single the Council member. And that district
8 could be included all the way over to Coney
9 Island Avenue to cover the area on the other side
10 of the Brighton line, which also shares the same
11 kinds of issues and the same kinds of problems
12 that we have.

13 So, again, I am asking that this proposed
14 plan be modified to include our old neighborhood
15 into the 45 Councilmanic district.

16 Thank very much.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is Henri-Robert Maguet, to
19 be followed by David Doborz.

20 MR. MAGUET: Good evening. I am a resident
21 of the Midwood Park, I am actually the president
22 of the board, association board, I have been a
23 resident of Midwood Park for over seventeen years
24 and I have actually lived in the area for nearly
25 forty years.

1 I am actually a neighbor of Mr. Fred Baer,
2 who just spoke. We actually share a common
3 grounds insofar as the boundaries of the Fiske
4 Terrace an Midwood Park. We have been a landmark
5 area for nearly six or seven years now. We
6 fought very hard to obtain that status. We do
7 feel -- I personally feel and also a lot of my
8 associates do feel that the boundaries that are
9 set for Midwood Park currently actually end at
10 East 17th Street, which is actually the block
11 that I reside on, but across the street from me,
12 is another district. Across the street from me
13 is another district, plus the end curb streets
14 that are actually in the area. We have two of
15 them. De Koven Court and also Irvington Place.
16 So I do feel strongly that this remaining area
17 should be incorporated to become part of the
18 Midwood Park and as a whole become part of 45th
19 District.

20 And if anything, it should also be extended
21 all the way to Coney Island Avenue, because this
22 entire area share the sameness of insofar as the
23 types of housing that are in the area, these are
24 all very old Victorian homes that were built in
25 the 1880s, early 1900s. So most of the houses in

1 the area are over a hundred years old. Again, we
2 have gotten landmark status ourselves and it's
3 the goal for the remaining area, the residing
4 area in the neighborhood to also obtain the
5 landmark status that would actually embellish the
6 area and really support the possibility of
7 maintaining the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

8 So Midwood Park and Fiske Terrace as one
9 neighborhood, that's the way we know it, so we
10 don't really need to know it as two separate
11 districts; in essence, it should really be one.
12 We could really gather all of our troops and
13 really get more done, more accomplished if we
14 have to deal with one Council Member, okay, and
15 one district.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

18 Our next speaker is David Doborz, to be
19 followed by Barbara Schliff.

20 MR. DOBORZ: Good evening, Commissioners and
21 fellow Brooklynites. My name say David Doborz.
22 I am the spokesperson for the St. John's Lutheran
23 Church Social Action Committee, one of the forty
24 members of the Broadway Triangle coalition that
25 is urging more affordable housing in our

1 community for everybody.

2 Let me explain, our district, the 34th, is
3 historically working people of a wide variety of
4 ethnicities, we cannot afford to live in the
5 market rate housing that is gobbling up our
6 neighborhood.

7 Also, we are not welcome to the 80 percent
8 affordable housing in the 33rd District.

9 So we are left with 20 percent affordable
10 housing that is slowly, but surely, destroying
11 our neighborhood, because it's not adequate.

12 So I am here to urge you to leave the
13 Broadway Triangle in the 34th District for this
14 reason.

15 If we are not able to, at the end the day,
16 build inclusionary affordable housing in that
17 Triangle, we are going to lose even more.

18 And we are, as I said, dying as a community,
19 because we depend upon affordable housing for our
20 continued existence in the community.

21 So under no circumstances do we want that
22 moved out, we agree completely that it should
23 stay in, so that we can continue to advocate for
24 inclusionary housing there.

25 And when we build our housing, we include

1 everybody, including the folks that exclude us.
2 And you will see them living side by side on Cook
3 Street, just a few blocks away from the Triangle
4 that we desperately need to continue that custom,
5 but it is going to be extremely difficult if that
6 should continue in the 33rd.

7 So I hope I am clear here about the
8 importance of the survival of the working people
9 in the 34th District.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

12 Our next speaker is Barbara Schliff, to be
13 followed by our last registered speaker, Dynishal
14 Gross.

15 MS. SCHLIFF: Hi, my name is Barbara
16 Schliff. I am here representing the Broadway
17 Triangle Community Coalition. I have also been a
18 housing organizer with Southside United Housing
19 Los Sures for the past thirty-eight years. We
20 are also a member of the Broadway Triangle
21 Community Coalition, our organization, one of the
22 forty members.

23 So I am well aware of the housing
24 discrimination that has been going on in the
25 Broadway Triangle area and Williamsburg for the

1 past thirty-eight years.

2 Once again, I am here to support your
3 proposal to put the Broadway Triangle area into
4 the 34th Congressional District, because it will
5 be better represented, it will be better able to
6 have diversity and housing for everyone that who
7 needs it in the area, not just one specific
8 group.

9 Another reason that it seems logical, and I
10 think maybe you have taken this into
11 consideration, is that the 33rd District has one
12 of the highest populations currently, so -- and
13 the 34th, it has one of the lowest populations,
14 so putting more area into the 34th makes sense,
15 because there be more representation, more people
16 will be represented in that area.

17 So we think that is a good idea, and we are
18 very glad that you have done that.

19 Once again, we really need this area to be
20 in the 34th District, so it can be fairly
21 represented.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

24 Our last registered speaker is Dynishal
25 Gross.

1 MS. GROSS: Good evening, everyone. My name
2 is Dynishal Gross. Until earlier this year, I
3 was a member of the Prospect Lefferts Gardens
4 Neighborhood Association and one of the founding
5 member of the block association on Lincoln Road
6 between Flatbush and Ocean Avenues, and I am here
7 to oppose the splitting of that block of Lincoln
8 Road into two Council districts.

9 The proposal currently, the lines that have
10 been proposed would split Lincoln Road between
11 Flatbush and Ocean between the 35th and the 40th
12 Council District.

13 The historical boundaries of Prospect
14 Lefferts Gardens are Empire Avenue to the north,
15 Ocean Avenue to the west, Nostrand to the east
16 and Clarkson Avenue to the south, and we worked
17 very hard to integrate ourselves into the work of
18 the neighborhood association, we are a mixed-use
19 block, mixed commercial and residential, with
20 some significant infrastructure, an MTA station,
21 a pedestrian bridge, and we are working project
22 by project to improve this corridor into the
23 neighborhood agency by agency.

24 We need the support of the historic
25 district, we need the support of our community

1 board, we are a block with no homeownership, and
2 to be split from those sources of support for
3 these important infrastructure improvements would
4 be devastating to the work of our block
5 association and if we ignore these historic
6 neighborhood boundaries, which have been in place
7 since the neighborhood association was founded in
8 the late 1960s.

9 So I am urging you to maintain our community
10 unity, keep Lincoln, Lefferts, Sterling and the
11 other blocks in between Empire and Lincoln -- I
12 think I named them all, actually -- in the 40th
13 Councilmanic District. That is all the debate.

14 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

15 We have no additional registered speakers.

16 MS. BRAGG: Thank you all so much for
17 staying --

18 Oh, I'm sorry, are there any other speakers
19 who wish to approach the gays.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

21 MS. BRAGG: Okay, can you please give the
22 names to the staff members, so that we have a
23 record?

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Maria Garrett. I am
25 registered already.

1 MR. HACKWORTH: I will read through the ones
2 that I have already called out.

3 Joan Gordon?

4 Resach Greenberg?

5 Alexander Rapaport?

6 Elizabeth Grace Hall?

7 Maria Garrett?

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

9 MR. HACKWORTH: Okay.

10 Let's me just do the rest here.

11 Anne Marie Piene?

12 Michelle, on behalf of Mercedes Narcisse?

13 Marie Olivie Jeune?

14 Stanley Scott?

15 Sam Rubin?

16 Orlando Aupont?

17 So Maria Garrett.

18 MS. GARRETT: Thank you.

19 Good evening, member of the Commission. My
20 name is Maria Garrett. I live in Canarsie.
21 Thanks for letting me give testimony here
22 tonight.

23 From the time -- from the way the proposed
24 lines have been drawn, even an unsophisticated
25 observer can deduce that something is wrong.

1 I was reading the recent accounts and the
2 press about how two neighborhoods in Brooklyn and
3 Queens with fast-growing Asian and American
4 population weren't reported, making it much more
5 likely that the area would continue to lack
6 Asian-American elected votes, and Manhattan,
7 despite growing in a healthy clip, would cease
8 one City Council seat in the Bronx. This does
9 not make sense. Does this make sense? No. It
10 defies commonsense and basic good judgement.

11 As I said, I live in the Canarsie section of
12 Brooklyn and we have always been one unified
13 community, now your proposed lines and boundaries
14 would split the African-American community, while
15 keeping the Caucasian community with roughly the
16 same numbers and percentages as reported by the
17 2010 Census intact and untouched.

18 So on the one hand, the African-American
19 community is being gutted and disenfranchised,
20 while the Caucasian community is empowered and
21 intact. In fact, the guarantee is economic
22 power. This goes against the spirit and letter
23 of the New York City Chapter and Voting Act of
24 1965. That should never happen.

25 I urge the Commission to stop cracking and

1 packing districts for political purpose. Your
2 lines and boundaries have cracked Brooklyn's 46th
3 District along the Canarsie-Seaview area, Remsen
4 Garden at the expense of its residents, while
5 keeping intact two adjoining neighborhood
6 districts intact and largely untouched.

7 Our community is angry and upset at the
8 present lines that have drawn out the two
9 district businesses and homeowners who have
10 served and lived in the District 46 for over
11 forty years, collectively. The lines just drawn
12 -- the lines just drew them out and shoved them
13 into neighboring district, and since this
14 neighborhood district is about 40 percent
15 African-American, the small boundary adjustment
16 will make it difficult for us to be served.

17 That area will be ignored, because whoever
18 will be the new councilman does not need any tiny
19 member of Africa-American votes to get elected.
20 That is the result of the gerrymandering.

21 Oh, okay, I'm sorry.

22 So let's get it right, first we support the
23 Unity Map, it keeps majority communities intact;
24 second, it generally reflects demographics of New
25 York City and, third, it is a commonsense

1 solution to what becomes a partisan political
2 activity.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. HACKWORTH: Our next speaker is Yolla
5 Garraud?

6 And if there is anyone else who wants to
7 speak, please approach the microphone so you can
8 fill out a hearing card.

9 MS. GARRAUD: Good evening, Commissioners.
10 My name is Yolla Garraud. I have been living in
11 Canarsie for the past five years. I was raised
12 there, went to school there, South Shore High
13 School, I am raising and continue to raise three
14 beautiful children that two of them are this
15 college.

16 Canarsie is not just a neighborhood, it's a
17 family-oriented area. We spend so much money in
18 our homes to ensure that it becomes a legacy for
19 our children. Our children are safe in the area,
20 and it's unfortunate that as an African American,
21 Haitian born, however, that all of the struggles
22 that we go through and we try to enhance
23 ourselves, despite what powers that be attempts
24 to do or disparity that they attempt, we try, we
25 continue to try. And I thinks because in our

1 lifetime, struggle is part of us, so irregardless
2 what it is, I struggled in school, I struggled to
3 get my masters. So it is what it is. I struggle
4 in my workforce, so it's --

5 I mean our pea of mind, our Shangri-La is
6 our home, our community. So, again, I am
7 fortunate, because the fact that I worked so
8 hard, I really did not have the opportunity to
9 know what was going on.

10 And I thank you, our future Council woman,
11 Ms. Mercedes Narcisse, because she was so adamant
12 trying to get everyone in this neighborhood to
13 come and speak to all of you and try to make you
14 understand if we are working hard and we are
15 hardworking people and we continue to try to keep
16 our communities together, to grow financial. My
17 God, this is what he died for. You -- to me it's
18 always a revised tactic to downgrade us. It's
19 unfair. We need our neighborhoods. As you need
20 yours. It's not about politics. Everything is
21 about politics. Where is the humanity? Not just
22 for me, for all neighborhoods. Don't use us as
23 pawns.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. HACKWORTH: Our last speaker is Regina

1 Powell.

2 MS. POWELL: Good evening, Commission.

3 This is all new to me, coming here tonight.
4 I was asked to come out and just observe what is
5 going on and I have heard a lot of passionate
6 people speaking about the redistricting and being
7 passionate about their community.

8 Unfortunately, I heard some very heartfelt
9 feelings about East New York. That is my
10 district, 42nd District.

11 I am a community activist almost
12 thirty years in East New York, and I raised three
13 children, whom are educators, with master's
14 degrees, and I have a master's degree.

15 So I really feel good about the work I did
16 in East New York, and I believe that you can --
17 it depends on the family, what you do and how you
18 raise your children to have the best education.

19 Unfortunately, in my community, the schools
20 are closing at a rapid rate, and I am here as a
21 parent coordinator to speak on behalf of the
22 injustice that is done in East New York.

23 The passion that I hear from people in the
24 46th District talking about their children having
25 the best education, the schools having the best

1 services, and once they come into East New York
2 that everything will be downgraded, but, you
3 know, I am a very optimistic person, I feel if
4 you put things -- put people -- don't judge a
5 book by its cover. I am here pleading that the
6 resources get divided equally, so the so that the
7 children in East New York can have a better
8 chance to get the same good education as the
9 youth in the 46th District.

10 So, with that being said, I just hope that
11 whatever happens, whatever the outcome, that it
12 is the best for the children; it's not about us
13 per se, but it's about the children, they are the
14 future.

15 And like I said, if I did a good job as a
16 single parent, raising three children, who are --
17 two whom are teachers today, and I asked them
18 once you get your education, stay in the
19 community, help bring up the education level of
20 the children in the community. And I have been
21 doing that almost thirty years. So I just, you
22 know, just wanted to introduce myself, Regina
23 Powell, parent coordinator, community activist.

24 Thank you for listening.

25 MR. HACKWORTH: Thank you.

1 It appears there are no additional speakers.

2 MS. BRAGG: Thank you all so much for your
3 testimony. Please know that we will take all of
4 the testimony into consideration as we work on
5 the next draft of the maps.

6 We are adjourned until our next public
7 meeting, which is October 18th, at the Borough of
8 Manhattan Community College, at 1 o'clock.

9 Thank you so much. We are adjourned.

10 (Whereupon, at 9:07 P.M., the above matter
11 concluded.)

12

13 I, CLEO SHENKIN, a Notary Public for and
14 within the State of New York, do hereby certify
15 that the above is a correct transcription of my
16 stenographic notes.

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CLEO SHENKIN

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