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MICAH Z. KELLNER
76th Assembly District

January 7, 2013

NYC Districting Commission
Attn: Jonathan Ettricks
253 Broadway, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commission Members:

I have lived on the Upper East Side for over a decade and – since 2007 – I have been honored to represent my friends and neighbors in the New York State Assembly.

The proposed map for Manhattan's 5th Council District – located in the heart of my Assembly District – splits up a very close-knit community. The lines put forth by the commission takes a section of East 79th Street (between 2nd and Lexington Avenues) out of the 5th district.

This current proposal must not be allowed to stand.

East 79th Street has been dealing with the Second Avenue Subway construction since it began. There are more than a dozen residential buildings, occupied by tens of thousands of New Yorkers. Splitting up this area into two separate council districts is wrong for the residents and businesses there. The residents have a shared quality of life and require one councilmember to address their needs.

Just to the east and west of the area in question (east of 1st Avenue and west of 3rd Avenue) are a large number of restaurants and retail shops. These retail establishments create certain concerns to the residents of East 79th Street, namely environmental and sanitation issues that would become worse if the proposed map is approved.

Another major cause of concern for the community is the inadequate bus service on 2nd Avenue. When problems arise with respect to the MTA, the district needs one single councilmember who will advocate for its residents. Splitting the area – thereby requiring multiple councilmembers to push for the same initiatives – will only complicate matters.

The Upper East Side is a community like no other in the City of New York. There are renters and owners, senior citizens and children, small business owners and Wall Street executives. But we have always come together as one insular community in a large city.

We face challenges – but we face them as one. In recent years, we have dealt with hurdles such as the constant construction of the Second Avenue Subway and Mayor Bloomberg’s proposed Marine Transfer Station, which I and others in our community have been fighting for years. We need a councilmember who will know what our needs are as a district and be able to relay that to City Hall to get the right results.

I implore the members of the commission to adjust the proposed council lines to include the area of East 79th Street between 2nd and Lexington Avenues. It will make a huge difference in the lives of the people of the 5th Council District and I urge you to take our objections to heart.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. If there are ever any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me in my office at (212) 860-4906.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Micah Z. Kellner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Micah Z. Kellner
Member of the Assembly