



**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Testimony to the City Districting Commission, Bronx Public Hearing**  
**Theresa Doherty, Municipal Affairs Committee Member**  
**January 9, 2012**

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Good evening, Chair Romano and other members of the City Districting Commission. My name is Theresa Doherty, and I am a volunteer member of Citizens Union, a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers.

In a letter to the Commission sent earlier this week, Citizens Union provided recommendations for increased transparency, as well as individual districts. I will focus on recommendations for the Bronx tonight on behalf of Citizens Union.

I also speak as someone who has spent much of my adult life in the Bronx. I went to college in Riverdale, I worked for 5 years in a community-based organization just 20 blocks north of here, in Mt. Eden, and I now live in Pelham Bay. What I know from this rich experience is that, while each neighborhood has its distinct voice and needs, there is also the recognition and pride that each community is part of the larger fabric of NYC.

As was discussed at the Manhattan hearing earlier this week, Citizens Union has concerns regarding Council District 8. By placing the majority of District 8 into the Bronx, an imbalance has been created, resulting in Manhattan having districts that are on average 4 percent larger than the ideal district size. Though the proposed District 8 would increase Latino representation in the Bronx by essentially adding a new seat, one has to question whether it does so at too high a cost. East Harlem continues to be divided in the proposed maps, despite the overwhelming opposition of its residents, community groups, and good government groups such as Citizens Union. Additionally, the neighborhood of Woodstock in the South Bronx which is represented by the current district 17 would be divided. We again urge you to correct this district by restoring all of East Harlem into District 8.

I would also like to reiterate Citizens Union's recommendation that the Commission provide to the public in advance of any vote on final maps a written rationale detailing the decision-making of the Commission for each district. For example, the rationale should include how the Commission addressed requirements in the City Charter and specifically address how it handled public requests regarding their districts. This information is essential to ensure that the public has more information about the choices that were made and potentially more confidence in the end result.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.