

December 20, 2012

Dear members of NYC Council Districting Commission!

In October I sent my letter to the NYC Districting Commission (please see attached) and asked for a creation of the district in Southern Brooklyn that will ensure that Russian American community will have a fair chance to elect a first Russian-American to the New York City Council. It will be a tremendous milestone for our community and for the whole New York City that we love so much and we were happy that NYC Districting Commission met our request.

Today I want to use a chance and to thank members of your Commission for doing the right thing. The proposed lines of 48th Council District are fair, just and logical. They unite communities and neighborhoods of common interest and at the same time give a real chance for Russian Americans to elect their first representative to the New York City Council.

I truly appreciate your commitment to our vibrant community. Please, do not change the proposed lines of 48th District. Stick to your decision!

Thank you very much.

Inna Stavitsky,

President of American Association of Jews from the former USSR,
AAJFSU.

Dear members of NYC Council Districting Commission!

My name is Inna Stavitsky and I am the President of American Association of Jews from the former USSR, AAJFSU.

AAJFSU is the oldest non-partisan, non-for-profit organization representing thousands of Russian-speaking Jews who are registered voters. We provide annual voting registration drives within the Russian-speaking and other immigrant communities making sure they receive objective information in order to encourage their civic participation and responsibility and to make them an indispensable part of the American electoral process.

Russian-American Community as an integral part of New York City flourished in our great city allowing Russian-speaking immigrants to achieve tremendous success in business, culture, sports, arts, science, medicine and politics.

There are more than 350,000 Russian Americans in all five boroughs and Brooklyn is a home of the largest Russian-speaking community in the United States.

We have in government: NYS Senator David Storobin, Assemblyman Alec BrookKrasny, Democratic District Leaders Ari Kagan and Mark Davidovich, Republican District Leader Boris Pincus. Nevertheless, as of today there are no Russian-Americans in New York City Council and community is eager to change this situation.

When we looked at the proposed redistricting map, it became obvious that the lines of 48th Council District are redrawn in a special way to divide the Russian-speaking voters' power and give no real opportunity to Russian Americans to win elections in this district.

The Commission cut out significantly Russian-speaking Manhattan Beach from 48th district and added to it a significant part of Midwood with predominantly Orthodox Jewish population.

While we value our good relationship with every Brooklyn community, including Orthodox Jews, we strongly believe that 48th District should be able to consolidate the unique, vibrant and active Russian-American community, so that we would be able to give a chance for an immigrant of Russian decent to be elected to New York City Council.

So, I am asking the Districting Commission to take several blocks in Midwood (in areas of Avenue J, K, L, M and others that were added to the current boundaries of 48th District) and to move them back to the 44th District (currently represented by Councilman David Greenfield).

In order to offset the population from these Midwood blocks, I am asking the Commission to include several buildings located along Seabreeze Avenue (with many Russian-speaking residents) into 48th District, excluding them from the current 47th District.

By implementing these actions, you will ensure that Russian American community will have next year a fair chance to elect a first Russian-American to the New York City Council. It will be a tremendous milestone for our community and for the whole New York City that we love so much. As President of one of the major advocacy immigrant organizations, I do hope that the Commission will adhere to the appeal of the community.

Thank you,

Inna Stavitsky.

Dear members of NYC Council Districting Commission!

My name is Dmitry Margulis and I am President of the Association of East European Jewry.

AEEJ is a non-partisan, non-for-profit organization that is working primarily with Russian speaking Jewish immigrants all over the city. We started our activities in 1993. We specialize on organizing Jewish cultural events like festivals and art exhibitions, forums and seminars about Yiddish literature, celebrations of Chanukah and Purim, memorial events in the Holocaust Memorial Park. AEEJ is one of the oldest and most respected Russian Jewish groups in New York and we have dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly on behalf of our community. We are long time members of the Council of Jewish Emigres Community Organizations (COJECO).

As you know, Russian American Community became an integral part of New York City. Our community flourished in our great city. Russian-speaking immigrants achieved tremendous success in business, culture, sports, arts, science, medicine and politics.

There are more than 350,000 Russian Americans in five boroughs. Brooklyn is a home of the largest Russian-speaking community in the United States. But unfortunately there are no Russian American members in the New York City Council. That is why it's so important that your commission will create a district in Southern Brooklyn where Russian speaking candidate will have a real chance to be elected to the City Council.

We strongly believe that currently proposed lines of the 48th District are best suited for these purposes. By uniting Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, most of Sheepshead Bay, Luna Park, Sea Breeze Avenue and part of Trump Village in one district, your Commission did a right thing and created a great district for our community. Also, these neighborhoods have a lot in common and it is logical that they would be represented by the same Council member.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment to the Russian speaking community. Please, do not change the currently proposed lines of 48th district. They are very important for the future of our community in New York City.

Thank you,
Dmitry Margulis

Dear members of New York City Districting Commission,

My name is Alec Teytel and I am the President of the Bensonhurst Business Club. Our Club is a non-for-profit organization with more than 200 members' mostly Russian speaking small business owners and professionals. Our members are actively participating in all local and national elections. We cooperate very closely with JCH of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn elected officials and Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.

As a club President I support the current lines that NYC Districting Commission approved after last public hearings in October of 2012. As Russian speaking American I feel very strongly about importance of creating a Council District where Russian speaking community has a fair chance to elect one of its members to the New York City Council. There are more than 350,000 Russian speaking New Yorkers today in our city. Russian speaking immigrants achieved tremendous success in business, culture, sports, arts, science, medicine and politics. But until today we have not a single Russian American in New York City Council and community is eager to change this situation.

The best way to ensure that Russian Americans are represented in NYC Council in a fair and just way is to keep recently approved lines of 48 Council District intact. By including Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, most of Sheepshead Bay, Luna Park, Sea Breeze Avenue and part of Trump Village in one district, your Commission did a right thing and created a fair district for our community.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment and fairness. Please, do not change the proposed lines of 48th district. They are very important for the future of our community in New York City.

Thank you.

Alec Teytel

12/24/2012

Dear members of New York City Districting Commission!

My name is Fira Stukelman and I am a Holocaust survivor and a leader of a large group of volunteers. We are involved in many local civic projects as well as in Holocaust memorial ceremonies and in various charity events.

We really appreciate the current lines that NYC Districting Commission approved after last public hearings in October. As Russian speaking Americans we feel very strongly about importance of creating a Council District where Russian speaking community has a fair chance to elect one of its members to the New York City Council. There are more than 350,000 Russian speaking New Yorkers today in our city. But we don't have a single Russian speaking member in the New York City Council.

The best way to ensure that Russian Americans are represented in NYC Council in a fair and just way is to keep recently proposed lines of 48 Council District intact. By including Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, most of Sheepshead Bay, Luna Park, Sea Breeze Avenue and part of Trump Village in one district, your Commission did a right thing and created a great district for our community.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment to the Russian American community. Please, do not change the currently proposed lines of 48th district. They are very important for the future of our community in New York City.

Thank you.

Fira Stukelman

Dear members of NYC Council Districting Commission!

My name is Mikhail Shats, MSW, MA, and I am Executive Director the Russian American community drug/alcohol abuse prevention & recovery nonprofit organization: ‘SOS Foundation, Inc.’

SOS Foundation Inc. as a non-partisan, non-for-profit organization with over than 700 Russian-speaking members – families of drug/alcohol abusers who are registered voters. We provide objective information and education to Russian-Americans in order to encourage their civic participation and responsibility and to make them an indispensable part of the American electoral process.

During its 15 years long existence (registered in 10/37/1997), SOS Foundation, Inc. has not only successfully fulfilled all contract obligations, but has also created in the community an absolutely unique and effective prevention, after-treatment rehabilitation for recovery drug/alcohol addicts network. More than 20 community organizations and professional services under SOS Foundation, Inc. supervision have combined their expertise, experience and opportunities in order to decrease the spread of the drug epidemic among children in the community and to make treatment for needy people less expensive and more effective. This network includes various programs of community drug/alcohol abuse education, medical and psychological rehabilitation, vocational programs, social rehabilitation and programs for changing an old lifestyle with a dependence on drugs and alcohol to a new healthy lifestyle, one without narcotic substances. Network programs also focus on a very important issue: preventative steps against the recurrence of drug or alcohol abuse. Each independent member performs only his/her professional duty and service, but the combination of all network services provides a unique and effective chance to each client for full recovery and return to a normal life.

SOS Foundation Inc is not only the initiator and organizer of the unique drug/alcohol abuse project ‘**PITaR**’ network, but is also the coordinator of all client cases that are in this Network’s programs.

As you know, Russian American Community is an integral part of New York City. Our community flourished in our great city. Russian-speaking immigrants achieved tremendous success in business, culture, sports, arts, science, medicine and politics.

There are more than 350,000 Russian Americans in all five boroughs. Brooklyn is a home of the largest Russian-speaking community in the United States. But we

still don't have a single Russian American in New York City Council and we think it is a time to change this situation.

The best way to ensure that Russian Americans are represented in NYC Council in a fair and just way is to keep currently proposed lines of 48 Council District intact. By including Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, most of Sheepshead Bay, Luna Park, Sea Breeze Avenue and part of Trump Village in one district, your Commission did a right thing and created a very good district for our community.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment to the Russian American community. Please, do not change the proposed lines of 48th district. They are very important for the future of our community in New York City.

By implementing these actions you will ensure that Russian American community will have a fair chance to elect a first Russian American to the New York City Council. It will be a tremendous achievement for our community and for the whole New York City.

Sincerely,

Mikhail Shats, MSW, MA
Executive Director.

Dear members of New York City Districting Commission!

My name is Pavel Vishnevetsky and I am the President of the New York Association of Holocaust Survivors. Our Association is a non-for-profit organization with more than 800 members who survived the horrors of the Nazi genocide during the WWII. Most of our members are proud American citizens who are actively participating in local and national elections.

We really appreciate the current lines that NYC Districting Commission approved after last public hearings in October. As Russian speaking Americans we feel very strongly about importance of creating a Council District where Russian speaking community has a fair chance to elect one of its members to the New York City Council. There are more than 350,000 Russian speaking New Yorkers today in our great city. But until now we don't have a single Russian speaking member in the New York City Council.

The best way to ensure that Russian Americans are represented in NYC Council in a fair and just way is to keep recently approved lines of 48 Council District intact. By including Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, most of Sheepshead Bay, Luna Park, Sea Breeze Avenue and part of Trump Village in one District, your Commission did a right thing and created a very good district for our community.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment to the Russian American community. Please, do not change the proposed lines of 48th district. They are very important for the future of our community in New York City.

Thank you.

December 23, 2012

Dear members of the NYC redistricting Commission,

The purpose of this letter is to express the appreciation of hundreds Russian New Yorkers to the Commission members for taking into consideration my comments about the boundaries of the 48th Council district, submitted on October 11, 2012. Also I would like to request from the Commission to preserve the last proposed lines of the 48th district, do not change them anymore and make them final.

My name is Valeriy Savinkin. I represent two community organizations: Odessa Community of New York and September 11 Family Group.

Odessa Community of New York is a non-profit organization, which unites immigrant from the City of Odessa, Ukraine. There are tens of thousands New Yorkers who came to USA from Odessa as refugees during last few decades of the 20th century.

September 11 Family Group is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization, which unites families, individuals, and organizations, who would like to participate in preserving the memory of innocent victims of the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. The vast majority of our members are Russian-speaking Americans, who reside in the 48th Council District.

In my previous comments made nonpublic hearing on October 11, 2012 I pointed three major reasons, why 48th district should be enlarged on its South part and shorten on top North portion. Here are those reasons.

1. Historically, immigrants from the former Soviet Union settled along the Brooklyn's South ocean shore on Manhattan Beach, Brighton Beach and East part of Coney Island. No wonder now this area is called Little Odessa. Obviously, we are one ethnic community, with common language, historical background, and cultural interests. The border between 47 and 48 district should not divide our Russian speaking community in parts, diminishing its voting power.
2. Asser Levy Park is very popular place for the outside public events, organized by various organizations in Russian speaking community. That's why 9/11 Memorial was built here in 2005 by local Russian speaking residents and businesses. Since then they maintain the area year round and organize traditional public ceremonies every year. Asser Levy Park is the only Park in the area of 48th district and should be included in it.
3. Chapter 2-A, section 52-1-d of the City of New York Charter explicitly prohibits any district to be more than twice as long as it is wide. To avoid that violation the 48th district needs to be enlarged on its South-Western part.

I happily learned recently that all my reasons were taken into consideration of the Redistricting Commission and the boundaries of 48th district were moved up to the West-12 St on South-West part of the district and down to Ave M on its North part. As a result, the 48th district will become more compact and keep intact our community with established ties of common historical, ethnic, religious and cultural interests.

Please, do not change the last proposed lines of the 48th District.

Respectfully,

Valeriy Savinkin,
President of Odessa Community of New York
Executive Director of September 11 Family Group

Dear members of NYC Council Districting Commission!

My name is Zinaida Konovalova and I am Chairwoman of the Russian American Community Coalition (RACC).

RACC as a non-partisan, non-for-profit organization with over than 2,000 Russian-speaking members who are registered voters. We provide objective information and education to Russian-Americans in order to encourage their civic participation and responsibility and to make them an indispensable part of the American electoral process. We provide social and psychological help, organize seminars and forums with business professionals and social workers. We defend rights of shareholders in co-op buildings and assist working people who are preparing for retirement.

As you know, Russian American Community is an integral part of New York City. Our community flourished in our great city. Russian-speaking immigrants achieved tremendous success in business, culture, sports, arts, science, medicine and politics.

There are more than 350,000 Russian Americans in all five boroughs. Brooklyn is a home of the largest Russian-speaking community in the United States. But we still don't have a single Russian American in New York City Council and we think it is a time to change this situation.

The best way to ensure that Russian Americans are represented in NYC Council in a fair and just way is to keep currently proposed lines of 48 Council District intact. By including Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, most of Sheepshead Bay, Luna Park, Sea Breeze Avenue and part of Trump Village in one district, your Commission did a right thing and created a very good district for our community.

I want to personally thank you for your commitment to the Russian American community. Please, do not change the proposed lines of 48th district. They are very important for the future of our community in New York City.

By implementing these actions you will ensure that Russian American community will have a fair chance to elect a first Russian American to the New York City Council. It will be a tremendous achievement for our community and for the whole New York City.

Thank you.

RUSSIAN – AMERICAN VOTERS EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE, INC.

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Rusamvlad@yahoo.com

Dear members of the NYC Council Districting Commission!

My name is Vladimir Epshteyn and I am the President of Russian- American Voters Educational League (RAVEL).

RAVEL was incorporated in 1997 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization and at this time consists of more than 25,000 Russian-speaking members who are registered voters.

RAVEL provides objective information and education to Russian-Americans in order to encourage their civic participation, to obtain the feeling of responsibility and to make them an indispensable part of the American electoral process.

Russian-American Community is an integral part of New York City and has flourished greatly. As it is nationally recognized, Russian-speaking immigrants achieved tremendous success in business, culture, sports, arts, science, medicine, and politics.

There are more than 350,000 Russian-Americans in all five boroughs of New York. Brooklyn is home to the largest Russian-speaking community in the United States but we still don't have any Russian- American representatives in the New York City Council.

In October 2012, I sent a letter to the NYC Districting Commission asking for the creation of an electoral district in Southern Brooklyn which will give the Russian-American population a fair chance to try to elect its very first representative to the New York City Council. In this letter I mentioned that your positive decisions would become a tremendous milestone not only for our community but for the whole of New York, to whom we owe so much.

Now, I want to use my chance to thank you - members of the Commission, for doing the right thing. The proposed lines of the 48th Council District are fair, just, and logical. They unite communities and neighborhoods of common interests and at the same time give a real chance for Russian-Americans to elect their first representative to the New York City Council.

I truly appreciate your commitment to our vibrant community. So I ask you dearly, please do not change the already proposed lines of the 48th District.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Vladimir Epshteyn - RAVEL President.