

ALLIANCE OF SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN LABOR (ASAAL)

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PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner to reject these maps and redraw the new maps

January 14, 2013

NYC Districting Commission
253 Broadway, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Mazeda A. Uddin, I am the National Women Coordinator of the Alliance of South Asian American Labor (ASAAL) and a resident of Jamaica Hills, Queens.

ASAAL is a community-based organization whose membership includes trade unionists that are of South Asian heritage. Our mission is to increase the culture of civic participation in the larger South Asian American community based on our organizing experiences in the labor movement.

ASAAL's membership spans the five boroughs of this city and our membership is the largest in the borough of Queens. Our organization has been advocating for the empowerment of South Asian Americans in the redistricting process since 2010.

I want to bring your attention to the proposed 24th Council District, which divides the South Asian community at 150th street. The maps released on November 15, 2012 separate Jamaica Hills from Briarwood - thereby diluting the strength of the community there. The community objects to the proposed Council district maps that were released on November 15, 2012. The proposed maps split the growing and vibrant South Asian American neighborhoods of Briarwood and Jamaica Hills from each other. The proposed maps place Jamaica Hills in district 24 and Briarwood in district 29. District 29 includes Rego Park and Forest Hills - areas that do not have any common connections with Briarwood. Briarwood is in Community District 8 while the rest of the new 29th district is in Community District 6. The ethnic and socio-economic compositions of the schools in Briarwood are not the same as those in Forest Hills and Rego Park. The students of PS 117, PS 82, PS 182 and JHS 217 are predominantly South Asian and Latino.

Briarwood and Jamaica Hills have always been kept together through this process until now. I was really shocked to see them split up in this latest version of the maps.

We demand to keep our community united and adhere to your duties under the Charter of the City of New York to preserve communities of interest. We ask the Commission to then redraw the lines to keep Briarwood and Jamaica Hills together in district 24.

Thank you,
Mazeda A. Uddin,
ASAAL Women's Coordinator