



Written Testimony for the New York City Districting Commission

Vedesh Persaud, Program Coordinator
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. My name is Vedesh Persaud and I am the Program Coordinator for the Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Inc. (ICA).

As some of you may know, ICA is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization that provides a range of services and advocacy for the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian community in South Queens. Our members are mostly Guyanese, Trinidadians and other South Asians who reside in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, Woodhaven and South Ozone Park. These areas are currently represented by City Council Districts 28 and 32.

We previously came before this commission along with our ACCORD partners on August 21st and October 10th. We are here again today to request that our community be kept as a single district to reflect the ground realities where the community is unified, except for the political division along Lefferts Boulevard with the City Council lines.

Based on the most recent map, Lefferts Boulevard was removed as the dividing line for a few blocks in Richmond Hill. Council District 32 now includes more of our religious establishments, shopping centers and our friends and families. Yet, some key places are still left out of this configuration, like Trimurti Bhavan, one of the oldest and most visited mandirs in our community located at 97th Avenue and 101st Street. Nonetheless, this has been a welcome change in our community and we are very pleased that the Commission has recognized that this is indeed a community of interest which should be kept together.

On the other hand, we are disappointed that South Ozone Park – part of the same community of interest – remains falsely divided along Lefferts

Boulevard. This divide is significant since it affects so many of our residents. The only senior center serving our community, the United Hindu Cultural Council Senior Center located at 118th Street and Sutter Avenue is completely cut out. A host of other key establishments, including John Adams High School are also left out of the community.

We are asking that the Commission remove Lefferts Boulevard as the dividing line in our community. This is the same request we have made at each appearance before this Commission. While we appreciate the changes that were made in Richmond Hill, the process is incomplete without further adjustments to South Ozone Park as well. These are part of a single community and they must be kept in a single district.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify before you again, and we hope to see further changes to the proposed maps with regard to Council Districts 28 and 32.

Thank you.