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**Statement by the
Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy to the
New York City 2012-2013 Districting Commission
for the Queens Borough's 2nd Round Public Hearing
Delivered by James Hong**

October 10, 2012

LaGuardia Community College, Little Theater
31-10 Thomson Ave., Long Island City, New York, 11101

Good afternoon members and staff of the Districting Commission, Chairman Romano, citizens and residents of Queens. My name is James Hong and I am speaking on behalf of ACCORD, the Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy. Our mission, as a non-partisan and pan-Asian coalition, is to advance the opportunities for all Asian Americans have to meaningful participation their elections.

Being divided among different districts – the fracturing or “cracking” of minority populations – is today the greatest problem New York City’s Asian Americans are facing in our current district lines and in the preliminary map released last month.

If it feels a bit like déjà vu when our members and allies make their statements today, it’s for a good reason. Little has changed since August, when we were commenting on the current district lines.

Our input is the same:

- Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park are divided along Lefferts Boulevard, between Districts 28 and 32. Lefferts Blvd is a main thoroughfare for that neighborhood and community. End the cracking of Richmond Hill’s Asian American community. Unite Richmond Hill.
- The neighborhood of Bayside is also divided, with a northern section in District 19, and southern portion of the neighborhood falling into District 23. This area, also known as Oakland Gardens, should be included into District 19. The residents of Oakland Gardens often identify themselves as living in Bayside. At the last Queens hearing, various residents of Eastern Queens independently supported the inclusion of the Oakland Gardens area into District 19. For our working definitions of these neighborhoods we again recommend AALDEF’s community boundaries survey.
- The neighborhood of Elmhurst is even more divided according to the preliminary draft, with large parts of it now joined to the 29th District. Elmhurst, a heavily immigrant Asian American neighborhood, shares much more in common with the rest of District 25 and Jackson Heights than with Rego Park, Forest Hills and Kew Gardens in the 29th District. The area bounded by the BQE on the west, the Long Island Expressway on the south, Junction Blvd on the East and Roosevelt on the North should be kept whole and be part of the 25th District.

We again express our coalition's support for the Unity Map drawn with support from the African American, Latino and Asian American communities.

And on a positive note:

- The neighborhood clusters of Bellerose, Floral Park, Queens Village and Glen Oaks are currently kept whole and this should not change.
- Briarwood and Jamaica Hills should also stay together and intact.
- Finally, Flushing, East Flushing, Murray Hill and Queensboro Hill are currently largely kept whole within a single district. This should not change.

As a coalition and a community we are saying make our voices and votes count; produce a district plan that brings an equal voice to the Asian American residents and voters of Queens and all of New York City.

ACCORD's members include the following organizations: Asian American Bar Association of New York, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Asian Pacific Americans for Progress New York, Chhaya CDC, Chinese Progressive Association, Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Korean Americans for Political Advancement, Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, MinKwon Center for Community Action, OCA-NY, Taking Our Seat, United Chinese Association of Brooklyn, YWCA of Queens and Dr. Carol Huang of Queens, New York.