

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 is an integral part of New York City. Our community 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 with Brooklyn being a home of the largest Russian-speaking community in the United States.

We have in government: NYS Senator David Storobin, Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny, Democratic District Leaders Ari Kagan and Mark Davidovich, Republican District Leader Boris Pincus, but till 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 giving no real opportunity to Russian Americans to win elections in this district.

The Commission cut out 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.

