



**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 Pre-Map Release Public Hearing
Delivered by James Hong**

August 21, 2012
Queens Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11355

Good afternoon Districting Commission members, staff and concerned citizens of Queens. My name is James Hong and I am here speaking on behalf of ACCORD, the Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy.

ACCORD is a non-partisan, pan-Asian coalition of 14 organizations across the city. We are committed to advancing the opportunity of Asian Americans and minority communities to meaningfully participate in the political process.

We urge the Commission today not to approach the task of redistricting as merely the one of equalizing populations among districts. By our city's own charter, our city council lines should reflect our communities of interest. This will require thoughtful consideration of demographics and community input, and ultimately, whether the district lines will account for and respect what are dramatic changes underneath a seemingly modest 2.1% increase in citywide population.

For example, the Asian American population in Queens grew 30.6% between 2000 and 2010. There are now over half a million Asian Americans in this borough and they are 22.8% of its population. Just to put it in perspective, fully half of New York City's Asian American population resides in Queens.

Our member organizations will speak more specifically to certain neighborhoods. However, we want to point out two areas that need significant changes: Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park, and Bayside.

- We consider Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park to be a single community of interest, and currently, voters there are divided and thus diluted among four elected officials. This area should be united within a single city council district and thus given meaningful representation.
- The neighborhood of Bayside is also divided, and while much of it is in district 19, the southern portion of the neighborhood falls into district 23. This area, also known as Oakland Gardens, should be joined into district 19. The residents of Oakland Gardens often identify themselves as living in Bayside. For the definitions of these neighborhoods we again recommend AALDEF's community boundaries.

And, with regards to other significant neighborhood clusters:

- The current district lines in Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and Woodside do not reflect the communities of interest existing in those neighborhoods, and should be reconfigured.
- 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.

We look forward to a draft from the Commission that brings 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, Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association, Taking Our Seat, United Chinese Association of Brooklyn, YWCA of Queens and Dr. Carol Huang of Queens, New York.