

Amended Testimony before the New York City Districting Commission

August 16, 2012

Thank you Chairman Romano and the members of the commission for holding this important hearing today. My name is Aya Keefe and I am a resident of Inwood, Council District 7. I am speaking here today in my capacity as a resident of Inwood and Council District 7. I am here to recommend district 7 remains intact.

I strongly believe district 7 should continue to include Inwood, Hudson Heights, Hamilton Heights and Morningside Heights. Over the past 3 years I have worked with members of Assembly District 71st and Council District 7 to create a coherent, unified voice, and to hold our representatives accountable to us and the issues we are concerned about.

During these years, I learned that the Inwood, Hudson Heights, Hamilton Heights, and Morning Heights neighborhoods share many of the same interests, and are well-suited to advocate on their collective behalf. For example, many of the big landlords have buildings throughout these neighborhoods, and tenants must deal with similar concerns about housing affordability and living conditions.

Our neighborhoods have a shared environmental agenda when it comes to our parks and the Hudson River. Each of these neighborhoods has dealt with some expansion of Columbia University in the past, and would greatly benefit from dealing with the University in the future as one unit. And finally, these neighborhoods are mostly in the same school district, District 6, which gives us the opportunity to continue fighting together to improve our schools.

I, together with members of my community, been working hard to get residents of upper Manhattan involved in the Democratic process. I would like to see districts simplified, so that it is easy for residents to identify the districts they are in and know the people who represent them. Keeping district 7 intact will make the various districts better aligned with each other. Furthermore, the Majority of residents of the new district 7 will be in State Senate district 31 and Assembly District 71. They will mostly be part of School District 6.

In conclusion, I believe that a district 7 which includes Inwood, Western Washington Heights, and West Harlem/Hamilton Heights will best represents the interests of our community and will allow us to continue to fight for the social issues we are concerned about together