

Testimony before The New York City Districting Commission

August 16, 2012

by
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I am a twenty year resident of Morningside Heights and a longstanding member of Community Board 9 Manhattan which extends along the Hudson River from 110th Street to 155th Street. For much of my time on CB9 I have served as Chair or Co-Chair of its parks and/or waterfront related committees.

I am thankful that the city undergoes this regular post-census public review of Council District lines and am grateful to chairman Romano and the members of the commission for this opportunity to make my specific plea in this process; which is to urge you to redraw the 7th Council District to unite my Morningside Heights neighborhood with the other neighborhoods served by CB9 - Manhattanville and Hamilton Heights.

A redrawn 7th Council District that extends south to 110th Street would unite all of Community District 9 in one Council District furthering the goal of efficient delivery of services through service area co-terminality. Making this change at the south end of the district while simultaneously adding Inwood west of Broadway to the 10th District at its north end retains minority voting power by preserving the diverse nature of the 7th District with its Latino plurality while strengthening the Latino majority in the 10th District and the African-American majority in the 9th.

The communities joined together in this redrawn 7th District are already linked based on geography, topography, transportation and shared community resources. It makes good sense that they should all share representation on the City Council.

First and perhaps foremost these neighborhoods all share a common waterfront. Access to this waterfront from our upland areas, ongoing revitalization efforts and environmental concerns will always be of vital importance to the livability and economic vibrancy of our communities. We also share common bus and subway lines and are the centers of higher education housing all three of Columbia University's campuses as well as City College. We are also linked through local non profits that provide services for our populations and by high rates of home ownership relative to surrounding neighborhoods.

In conclusion for the reasons stated I strongly urge the commission to extend the boundaries of the 7th Council District to the southern end of Community District 9 at 110th Street. Doing so preserves the 7th Council District as one of the most diverse in the city, meets all legal requirements and enhances the already strong natural connections that exist between the communities of Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, Hamilton Heights and Western Washington Heights.