

Hearings

From: Agnes Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 21, 2012 10:32 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

The Upper Manhattan Empowerment District's proposed map offered as an alternative is even worse. The latter seems to create a special district for Columbia University whereas Columbia University would be the epicenter. Both plans would put Columbia University under the auspices of a majority white population which on its face would be preferable to Columbia University considering the history between Columbia and the African American Community in Harlem.

It would also leave two public housing developments in the 7th District, Grant Houses and Manhattanville Houses, largely occupied by African Americans, vulnerable to predators. It is a commonly known fact that these two developments have been considered for some sort of privatization plan.

However, African Americans are the majority citizen voting-age population in all of Harlem. There are approximately 60,000 African Americans in West Harlem, 52,000 Dominicans and 33,000 whites. In all of the 7th District the African American population is 37%. The Dominican percentage is 47% and the white population is 15%.

Although the Dominican population in the entire 7th District is the majority population the Dominican citizen voting-age population does not have the majority. Having an African American representing the 7th District in city council for 3 terms, coupled with the total African American population in the 7th District, is evidence that the African American "minority" population is significant in this district if not self determining and is a protected group under the Voting Rights Act.

To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Agnes Johnson
Bronx, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

October 4th, 2012

NOTE: I am submitting this testimony via the NYC Districting Commission's website on 10/9/12 so that it appears online for the constituents of CD7 & CD10, and any others that are interested in reading testimony concerning these districts. I was present to testify the following on the 4th, however the Districting Commission cut off many people that were pre-registered and signed in to testify. Many of us had patiently waited hours to testify, only to be told we could not because the Commission made an agreement to vacate the venue by 9pm. Throughout the evening the Commission allowed speakers that exceeded their two minute allotted time to continue speaking, in many cases for several minutes, robbing many other Manhattanites the ability to testify. The following is what I would have presented to the Commission, had the testimonies been allowed to continue:

Good evening. My name is Alex Luis Castex-Porter. I am 29, and a lifelong resident of Washington Heights in what is currently the 10th City Council District. I work in residential real estate sales and primarily work in the 7th and 10th Council Districts.

The current proposed maps for the 7th and 10th districts are enormously troubling for several reasons.

First, the connections in these neighborhoods that I am going to describe tend to run in a north/south direction along the avenues, as do the geographical features of the land. These two points are extremely important when confronting the redistricting process in northern Manhattan.

The 7th district has been obviously dismantled and skewed, throwing out the window ties that have bound these neighborhoods for my entire life. Furthermore, as a Latino, I am upset that the 10th district's proposed map has diluted the power of my vote, and the chance that I will be represented by a Latino in the City Council.

Washington Heights and Inwood, under the proposed maps would also only have one councilmember north of 182nd Street which will limit funding in the four or five distinct sub-neighborhoods that are north of 181st Street from river to river.

These maps also pose a problem because they've put 5% more residents in each district when compared to other districts city wide.

Council District 7 has a wide range of common concerns and interests including:

- Bus and subway lines: M4, M5, M98, A-Train, C-Train and 1-Train.
- Many condos and cooperatives, meaning many home owners.
- The Greenway linking northern Manhattan to Battery Park.
- Waterfront Parks including Riverbank, which is a state park, and Fort Tryon Park, Fort Washington Park, Riverside Park, and Inwood Hill Park & Nature Center, which are city parks.
- Shared automobile transportation concerns in regards to the Henry Hudson Highway, George Washington Bridge, Trans-Manhattan Expressway and access points to these roads.
- Shared Columbia University facilities including the main campus, which lies just outside of District 7, The New York Presbyterian Hospital and Baker Field.

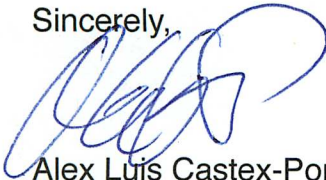
Council District 10 also has a wide range of common concerns and interests that include:

- Bus and subway lines: BX7, M3, M100, M101 and the 1-Train (north of 168th Street).
- Highbridge Park and the Sherman Creek Waterfront Esplanade.
- Immigrant rights advocacy and CBOs that do outreach to immigrant families, and children who are recent immigrants to the United States.
- Affordable housing, and tenants rights advocacy for those that are having rights violated by landlords.
- And of great importance council District 10 has one, if not the largest, Dominican populations in the world outside of the Dominican Republic.

These commonalities are obvious to anyone who has spent an afternoon walking through these neighborhoods. I would encourage you all to take a walking tour this weekend and become acclimated with the area, as the maps that have been proposed seem to have been drawn without a hint of knowledge about Washington Heights and Inwood.

I wish you well in this difficult process, and hope that the next maps reflect the neighborhoods more accurately.

Sincerely,



Alex Luis Castex-Porter

October 4, 2012

Commissioners of the NYC Redistricting Commission
Schomberg Research Center for Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, NY 10031

Commissioners:

I am speaking tonight to address the continuing division of the Upper West Side village sometimes known as Manhattan Valley and specifically the close knit neighborhood of the Upper West Side from Central Park to Riverside Parks and 96th Street to 110th street.

At the preliminary hearings, the commissioners heard about the oddity that the Upper West Side above 96th street, a ethnically diverse but a community of strong common interests, has been divided in the past and projected by the draft council lines to be divided in the future. Our natural community lines bounded by the Hudson River on the west and by Central Park and Morningside Park are recognized and use by nearly every city service district:

24th Precinct 96th to 110th Street
School District 3 57th to 123rd Street
5th Judicial District 59th to 110th Street
Columbus Amsterdam Business Improvement District
Library Catchment area
Health District

Our community, though ethnically and economically diverse, works together, from Riverside to Central Park West on our common local issues. In 2007, the Department of City Planning together with members of our community, and community board rezoned our neighborhood from 96th to 110th Streets CPW to Riverside Park in a two year effort.

Two years later, our community came together to support our locals schools, PS 145 and then PS 163 when the charter schools tried to evict the public schools. Again, this tight knit neighborhood rallied again.

And just last year, our Manhattan Valley neighborhood insisted on extending the Upper West Side retailing rezoning to preserve our local neighborhood stores for our natural retailing and if effect, our

downtown, Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway, between 96th and 110th streets. These business avenues service the neighborhood from CPW to Riverside.

It should be noted, that we have been very fortunate for the past eight years to be represented and supported by two extraordinary community centered council representatives, Melissa Mark Viverito, who has represented Manhattan Valley east of Amsterdam Avenue and Inez Dickens who has represented the area west of Amsterdam. Their strong backing and leadership has enabled us to work together. We are also extremely fortunate to have the UWS Council Member Gale Brewer as our neighboring council member who has both helped and led on several of our initiatives even though it is not her district.

At the last hearing, we requested a single district for our neighborhood and mentioned that most of our service districts run north south between Riverside Park on the west and the Morningside and Central Park on the west. The draft proposal divides are unified neighborhood into strips attached to two districts that run north into the northern borders of Manhattan. This makes even less sense than the previous district.

While we understand that some neighborhood must be at the tail end of a district and because of the maximum packed population of most of the Manhattan council districts, some council district must be that tail end. However it is unfair and unreasonable that not only that our community again be divided but now we will be attached to a council district with which we have no history or relationship – and furthermore matches our ethnic makeup the least. While personally, I think that basing representative district based upon ethnic population divides communities more than it represents them, since the federal guidelines concerning NYC districts does mandate drawing districts that increase minority representation, then it should be noted that Manhattan Valley's largest minority is Hispanic in over a two to one ratio over the next largest ethnic group.

Therefore, if our neighborhood must be divided, and again it should not because we are a wonderful multiethnic community that works extremely well together and fights for our common neighborhood interests, but if it must then we should continue to be linked to Council District 8 which has represented us for the last 20 years, and very ably represented us for the last 20 years by Melissa Mark Viverito and Phil Reed, and has whose minority population in the district as a whole is similar to our own.

Finally there is a fairly easy solution for the commission. Simply return the Upper West Side part of that is in the draft portion of Council District 7 to Council District 8 and give the northwest part of the Manhattan portion of Council District 8 to Council District 7 so that the populations remain the same.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Botfeld
Democratic District Leader 69th AD – Part A

Hearings

From: CATHERINE UNSINO [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 1:16 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Speaking at Oct. 4th Hearing on Re-Districting in Manhattan -- For your adoption of the Unity Coalition Recommendations

Dear Re-Districting Commission:

I speak in strong opposition to the re-districting proposed for the upper west side, especially but not exclusively about the plan

- 1) to split in two the historic 7 building complex located between 97th and 100th Streets (n/s) and Central Park West and Columbus Avenue (e/w) known as Park West Village; and
- 2) I also object to re-districting that would remove our effective, dedicated and committed Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito. She must continue to represent us as she has diligently on the upper westside.

1) I moved into Park West Village in 1968 because it was a racially and economically diverse, international, inclusive, progressive community -- a model for how we hoped our country would become. In fact at that time this area of the upper westside was renowned nationally as a unique and exemplary community in which people knew and mattered to each other across lines that elsewhere would categorize and compartmentalize us.

Neighbors within Park West Village have a history of sustained civic engagement on a range of issues of social justice. We have organized fund raisers for progressive causes and are politically active. We have formed self-help directories in each building to organize volunteers to help seniors and others. We developed a listserv for residents of our 7 buildings. We have formed book and film clubs, exercise programs, picnics, flea markets and a range of community activities open to all. To split this vibrant community along east/west lines would be a great injustice and would serve to weaken our voices and effective civic engagement. It would serve no constructive purpose for the people affected. One is moved to ask: what prompts this proposed re-districting at this time? Is it a strategy that would benefit individuals maneuvering for political advantage to the detriment of the best interest of citizens? That should be unequivocally rejected.

We read newspaper articles de-crying rampant income segregation across our country and see first hand how our city caters to the super rich while squeezing low and middle income New Yorkers beyond endurance. The district as it is presently constituted encompasses residents that embody the full spectrum of income levels. We use the same library, relax in the same area of Central Park, swim in its pool in the summer, buy produce at the same Farmers' Market, shop in the same stores. We know and matter to each other. If your proposal were to go through, Park West Village's representation would be split, we would be cut off from the Douglass Houses, from our neighbors at 106th St whom we have come to know and value. Often at our Farmers' Market, I see tourists enjoying the scene, led there by guides who volunteer to accompany them to interesting New York City Sites. They aren't only enjoying the fresh produce. Clearly, they are moved by the joyful diversity of our neighbors shopping together, exchanging international and regional recipes while enjoying the lively beat of our local jazz trio. Why would you tear apart such a beautiful fabric? First, do no harm.

2) Councilmember Melissa Mark Viverito has encompassed well the needs of her upper west side constituents, while also addressing concerns of those in East Harlem and the Bronx. I have met many new friends among residents of East Harlem I would otherwise not have had the opportunity to know. She has participated in our community meetings, has come to our homes, schools and community rooms learning first hand what our issues are, lending her expertise to help us grow grass roots initiatives and advocating for fairness and the people's

interest when those are threatened. Council Member Mark Viverito is an exemplary public official whose district must remain intact so she can continue superior representation. We value her effective, dedicated hard work and would find it destructive to all we value to lose her and her services at this critical time in our community. We urge that you embrace the universally valued admonition: First, do no harm.

CONCLUSION

We want our Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito to continue to represent us.

We urge that you retain our current district configuration and adopt recommendations promulgated by the Unity Coalition.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Unsino, LCSW

[REDACTED]
New York, NY [REDACTED]

Hearings

From: Sherrie Teachey <mail@change.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2012 7:00 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

The Upper Manhattan Empowerment District's proposed map offered as an alternative is even worse. The latter seems to create a special district for Columbia University whereas Columbia University would be the epicenter. Both plans would put Columbia University under the auspices of a majority white population which on its face would be preferable to Columbia University considering the history between Columbia and the African American Community in Harlem.

It would also leave two public housing developments in the 7th District, Grant Houses and Manhattanville Houses, largely occupied by African Americans, vulnerable to predators. It is a commonly known fact that these two developments have been considered for some sort of privatization plan.

However, African Americans are the majority citizen voting-age population in all of Harlem. There are approximately 60,000 African Americans in West Harlem, 52,000 Dominicans and 33,000 whites. In all of the 7th District the African American population is 37%. The Dominican percentage is 47% and the white population is 15%.

Although the Dominican population in the entire 7th District is the majority population the Dominican citizen voting-age population does not have the majority. Having an African American representing the 7th District in city council for 3 terms, coupled with the total African American population in the 7th District, is evidence that the African American "minority" population is significant in this district if not self determining and is a protected group under the Voting Rights Act.

To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

I smell a rat that has already rotted in my community.

Sherrie Teachey
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: deborah williams <mail@change.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 5:35 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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The historic integrity of Harlem and its people should be preserved

deborah williams
new york, New York

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Hearings

From: Terry Nelson <mail@change.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 4:29 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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Redrawing has obvious consequences for the people of Harlem. The redistricting is obvious land grab. Wall Street, San Juan Hill, now Harlem. Time to draw a line in the sand.

Terry Nelson
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Francine Brown <mail@change.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 4:29 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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Francine Brown
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Irwin Johnson <mail@change.org>
Sent: Monday, November 05, 2012 12:04 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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Irwin Johnson
new york, New York

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Hearings

From: Karen Smith-Moore <mail@change.org>
Sent: Monday, November 05, 2012 5:56 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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Although the Dominican population in the entire 7th District is the majority population the Dominican citizen voting-age population does not have the majority. Having an African American representing the 7th District in city council for 3 terms, coupled with the total African American population in the 7th District, is evidence that the African American "minority" population is significant in this district if not self determining and is a protected group under the Voting Rights Act.

To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Karen Smith-Moore
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Kim Powell <mail@change.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 04, 2012 8:27 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

The Upper Manhattan Empowerment District's proposed map offered as an alternative is even worse. The latter seems to create a special district for Columbia University whereas Columbia University would be the epicenter. Both plans would put Columbia University under the auspices of a majority white population which on its face would be preferable to Columbia University considering the history between Columbia and the African American Community in Harlem.

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The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

This another form of economic, political, and social genocide!
wake of folks!

Kim Powell
NEW YORK, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Akua Hope <mail@change.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 04, 2012 7:53 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

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The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Akua Hope
Manhattan, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: grace torres <mail@change.org>
Sent: Sunday, October 28, 2012 6:56 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

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Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

grace torres
bx., New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: olaiya deen <mail@change.org>
Sent: Sunday, October 28, 2012 5:27 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

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The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

They are marginalizing us therefore rendering us impotent.
What we must do is hold our elected officials feet to the fire

olaiya deen
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Carolyn Johnson <mail@change.org>
Sent: Sunday, October 28, 2012 3:05 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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Carolyn Johnson
new york, New York

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Hearings

From: Russel Shuler <mail@change.org>
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 9:21 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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Russel Shuler
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Antonia BADON <mail@change.org>
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 12:09 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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Retaining Harlem boundaries preserves Harlem's Historical Legacy, Cultural Diplomacy and Artistic Vibrancy!!! All major components that share the responsibility toward Harlem's economic empowerment.

Antonia BADON
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Nova Felder <mail@change.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:07 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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Nova Felder
Springfield Gardens, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Ebony Holder <mail@change.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 8:51 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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Ebony Holder
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Chris Asch <mail@change.org>
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2012 9:35 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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However, African Americans are the majority citizen voting-age population in all of Harlem. There are approximately 60,000 African Americans in West Harlem, 52,000 Dominicans and 33,000 whites. In all of the 7th District the African American population is 37%. The Dominican percentage is 47% and the white population is 15%.

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To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Chris Asch
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: R. Pikser <mail@change.org>
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2012 8:24 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

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R. Pikser
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Amanda Rosenblum <mail@change.org>
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2012 3:25 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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Amanda Rosenblum
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Maria Warren <mail@change.org>
Sent: Saturday, October 27, 2012 10:56 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

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The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

This will cause racial tension in our district.

Maria Warren
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: stefanie Siegel <mail@change.org>
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 8:13 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

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stefanie Siegel
Brooklyn, New York

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Hearings

From: David Dobosz <mail@change.org>
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 5:34 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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David Dobosz
Brooklyn, New York

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Hearings

From: Zhana Saunders <mail@change.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 2:54 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

There is too much done in the name of profit and not enough done in the name of people

Zhana Saunders
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Tiersa Smith <mail@change.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 2:54 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

I am an African American Citizen and I am tired of the government rezoning districts to gain political awareness for the younger white citizen voting-age population.

This is just out right wrong!!!!

Tiersa Smith
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Natasha Florentino <mail@change.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 12:06 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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Natasha Florentino
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: Oscar Carter <mail@change.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 10:14 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

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Oscar Carter
New York, New York

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Hearings

From: michelle frances shepard <mail@change.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2012 3:59 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

The Upper Manhattan Empowerment District's proposed map offered as an alternative is even worse. The latter seems to create a special district for Columbia University whereas Columbia University would be the epicenter. Both plans would put Columbia University under the auspices of a majority white population which on its face would be preferable to Columbia University considering the history between Columbia and the African American Community in Harlem.

It would also leave two public housing developments in the 7th District, Grant Houses and Manhattanville Houses, largely occupied by African Americans, vulnerable to predators. It is a commonly known fact that these two developments have been considered for some sort of privatization plan.

However, African Americans are the majority citizen voting-age population in all of Harlem. There are approximately 60,000 African Americans in West Harlem, 52,000 Dominicans and 33,000 whites. In all of the 7th District the African American population is 37%. The Dominican percentage is 47% and the white population is 15%.

Although the Dominican population in the entire 7th District is the majority population the Dominican citizen voting-age population does not have the majority. Having an African American representing the 7th District in city council for 3 terms, coupled with the total African American population in the 7th District, is evidence that the African American "minority" population is significant in this district if not self determining and is a protected group under the Voting Rights Act.

To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

My people are from this area of New York going back to my great-grandmother. My family still resides in the community. That's why.

michelle frances shepard
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Testimony to the NYC Districting Commission
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

October 4, 2012

NYC Districting Commission
253 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners:

I am a candidate for City Council in District 7, which is located on the western side of northern Manhattan. My financial and professional prospects are affected by the outcome of redistricting.

New York City's redistricting process is fundamentally undemocratic because it privileges politicians and their allies over the public. The New York City Charter lets politicians decide how to redraw the boundaries of Council Districts and gives them excessive influence in selecting candidates to run in the next elections—long before the public is given the opportunity to voice its concerns and preferences in redistricting.

New York City's redistricting process is deeply flawed and must be reformed through a Charter revision. It is not fair to residents, voters and candidates that redistricting starts so late and ends just before the next municipal primary election. This timing only benefits politicians in office and their associates.

New York City has the resources and the know-how to do better and to treat its residents with more respect by starting much earlier, opening up the process and enabling more meaningful participation by the public. Otherwise, politicians in office will have too much sway in future elections and in the people's choices of candidates.

Knowing that the process is politically charged and time-sensitive, the Commission should have prepared several options for the public to consider—instead of just one citywide proposal. Offering just a single citywide preliminary plan has caused many people to believe that redistricting is finished. Several elected officials and their staff members have remarked to me that I will be drawn out of the District in which I am a candidate, as if the Commission's preliminary map is indeed final.

The Commission has an obligation to help the public understand that there is not one way to redraw the boundaries of the Council Districts. For instance, the Commission could have also offered a plan that kept Council District 7 largely intact.

I am attaching to my testimony a petition signed by northern Manhattan residents and others that asks the Mayor and the Council to revise the City Charter long before 2020 to empower City residents and to enable them to more effectively participate in this process. The petition also asks that the boundaries of District 7 be kept largely intact and for the Commission to provide draft maps with this option.

I am concerned that the Commission's preliminary plan will adversely impact the ability of African Americans in New York County to elect candidates of their choice because it reduces the number of Council Districts in the County where an African American can get elected. In the existing configuration of Council Districts, there are two Council Districts in New York County that have elected African American candidates: 7 and 9.

The Commission's proposed District 7 increases the number of White residents and White voters, and moves District 7 into neighborhoods that could experience increases in high-income White residents due to Columbia University's planned development, rising rents and current home prices that are out-of-reach for most minorities. These trends could make it less likely that African Americans will be able to elect African American candidates in the proposed District 7.

This adverse outcome could be avoided by leaving the existing District 7 intact. As part of its work, the Commission should analyze and make public its assessment of the impact of its preliminary plan and any revised maps on the ability of African Americans and others in New York County that are protected under the Voting Rights Act to elect candidates of their choosing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Pahaham



PETITION
TO THE MAYOR, THE COUNCIL AND THE NYC DISTRICTING COMMISSION:
REDISTRICTING SHOULD FAIR AND TRANSPARENT AND INCLUDE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RIGHT FROM THE START.
LEAVE COUNCIL DISTRICT 7 INTACT.

We, the undersigned, urge the Council and the NYC Districting Commission to keep Council District 7 in northern Manhattan largely intact. We oppose the proposals to redraw District 7 that have been posted to-date on the Districting Commission's website because they exclude Inwood from the revised District. They are largely the product of negotiations involving little or no public input and they reduce our choice of candidates for City Council. We urge the Commission to discard these proposals and to give the public more options to review, including plans that keep District 7 largely intact.

The New York City Charter does not give City residents enough time to effectively participate in discussions on how to redraw Council District boundaries. Ending the Districting Commission's work just before petitions are due for the next municipal elections doesn't work for residents, voters and candidates. Residents and candidates for municipal office need more time to learn about redistricting and to create, consider or comment on proposals to redraw Council District boundaries.

New Yorkers deserve a fair and transparent redistricting process for 2020 and beyond. To achieve that, the New York City Charter must be revised to conclude redistricting at least one year before the next general municipal election; require the release, analysis, and mapping of Census data when New York City receives the Census data; give the public options by releasing multiple maps of proposed redistricting plans instead of just one; and require public education and awareness-raising efforts regarding redistricting throughout New York City neighborhoods prior to proposing redrawn boundaries.

UNA PETICION

AL ALCALDE, AL CONSEJO MUNICIPAL Y A LA COMISION DE DISTRIBUCION DE DISTRITOS DE NYC:

LA REORDENACION DE DISTRITOS ELECTORALES DEBE SER JUSTA Y TRANSPARENTE Y DEBE INCLUIR LA PARTICIPACION CIUDADANA DESDE EL INICIO.

IDEJE INTACTO AL DISTRITO 7I

Nosotros los suscritos exhortamos al Consejo Municipal y a la Comisión de Distribución de Distritos a que mantengan íntegro el Distrito 7 del Consejo, del norte de Manhattan. Nos oponemos a las propuestas para reordenar al Distrito 7 que hasta hoy aparecen en el sitio de Internet de la Comisión de Distribución de Distritos porque excluyen a Inwood del distrito modificado.

Estas propuestas son en gran parte el resultado de negociaciones carentes de consulta con el público, y nos limitan en la gama de posibles candidatos para representarnos en el Consejo. Recomendamos encarecidamente que la Comisión abandone estas propuestas y que ofrezca al público otras opciones para su revisión. Estas deben incluir planes que conserven íntegro al Distrito 7.

La Carta Municipal de Nueva York no proporciona a los vecinos el tiempo suficiente para participar eficazmente en discusiones sobre la redefinición de los límites de los distritos. La Comisión de Distribución de Distritos concluye sus labores justo antes del límite de tiempo para entregar peticiones, lo que no conviene ni a los vecinos, a los electores ni a los candidatos. Tanto los residentes como los candidatos a cargos públicos municipales requieren más tiempo para informarse sobre la reordenación y para discutir o elaborar propuestas alternativas para la modificación de límites de los distritos.

Los neoyorquinos merecemos un proceso de reordenamiento justo y transparente para el 2020 y más allá. Para lograrlo, será necesario redactar la Carta Municipal para que el proceso de reordenamiento concluya por lo menos un año antes de los próximos comicios municipales generales. Debe además estipular la publicación, análisis y mapeo de los datos del censo poblacional en el momento en que la Ciudad de Nueva York los recibe. Debe ofrecer al público una gama de opciones, en forma de mapas de múltiples posibles esquemas de organización de distritos, y no sólo uno. Por último, debe plantear acciones de educación y creación de conciencia pública sobre el proceso de reordenamiento en todos los distritos de la Ciudad de Nueva York antes de entrar a la fase de propuestas.

① Cheryl Pakkawan

② Luis Verbeke

③ Deivika Engels

④ Milena Cuellar

⑤ Todd Rosenthal

⑥ Rachel Kossler

⑦ Sandra Noreta

⑧ Kara Zikora English

⑨ Elizabeth Smalgrass

⑩ Molly Shabica

⑪ DAVID M. KIMMER

⑫ PATRICK LE BETHAN

⑬ Robert M. Johnson

⑭ Theresa Kenner

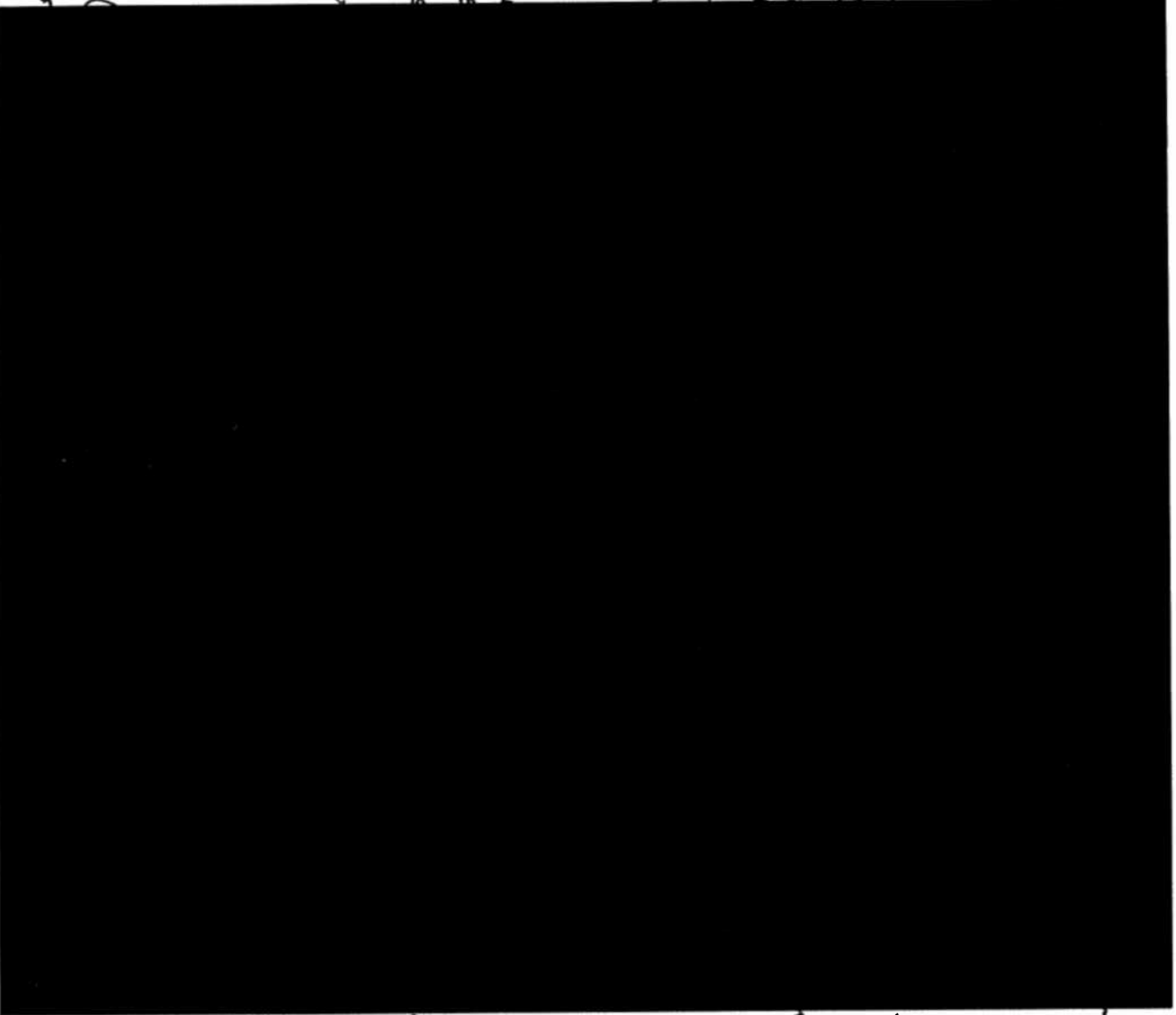
⑮ Rachel W. Miller

⑯ Phillip Ryan

⑰ Molly McLaughlin

⑱ Jane Lindemann

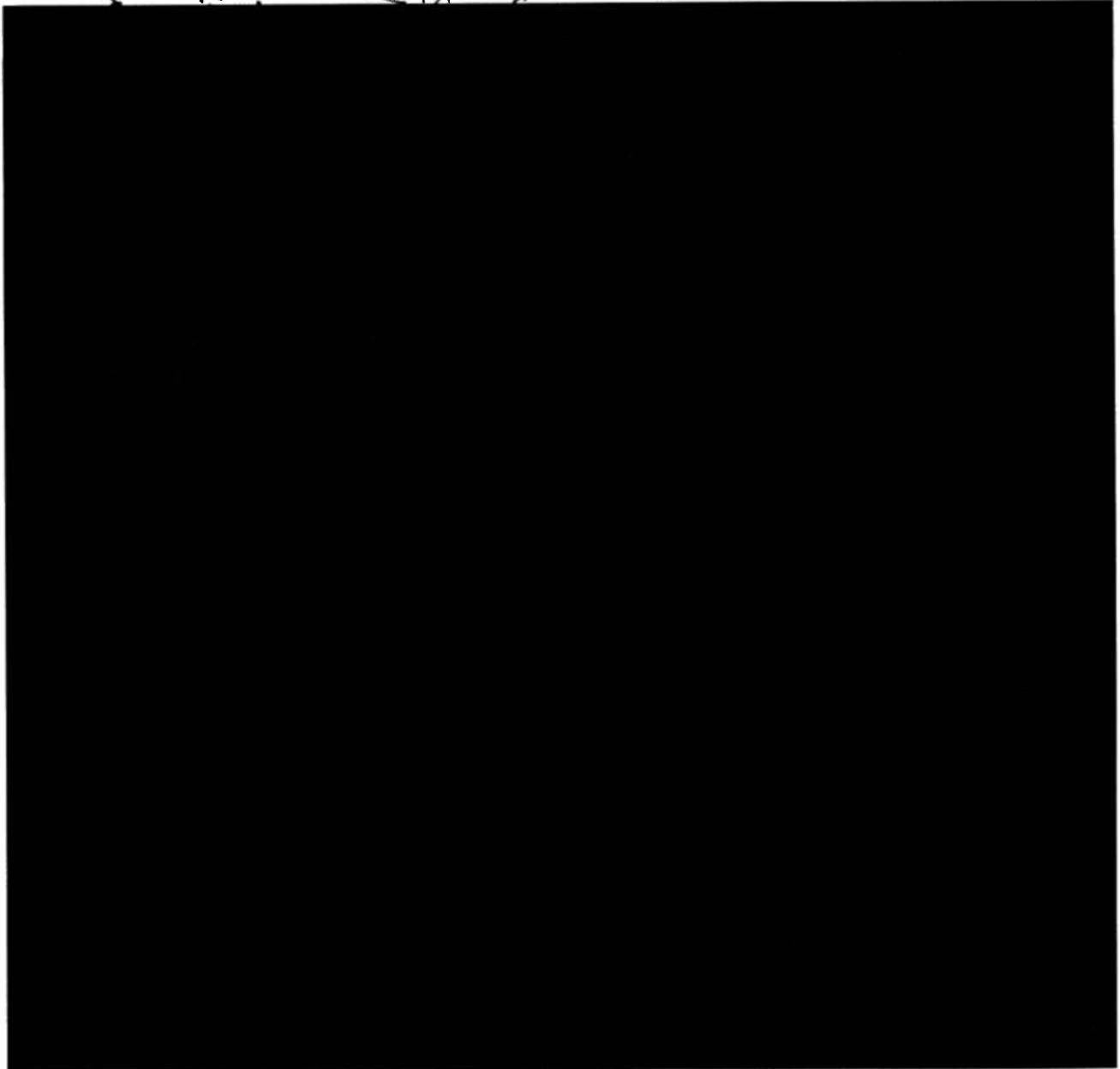
- 19 Jordan Hall
- 20 Phil Matrose.
- 21 Jack DePitt
- 22 Audrey
- 23 Joe William
- 24 Nicki Gwynes-
- 25 Karyn Gerhart
- 26 Colleen Teske
- 27 Robn Benjamin
- 28 Erin Daxsey
- 29 PJ Brum
- 30 Sheila O Byrne
- 31 Mary O'Shaughnessy
- 32 Michael Collins
- 33 LEV BURTONS
- 34 Susan Keith
- 35 Victoria Charles
- 36 Martin Kavanagh
- 37 Mr Denis
- 38 Nuala Westcott
- 39 Jon Munroe
- 40 Mrs Col
- 41 Judy Gibbs



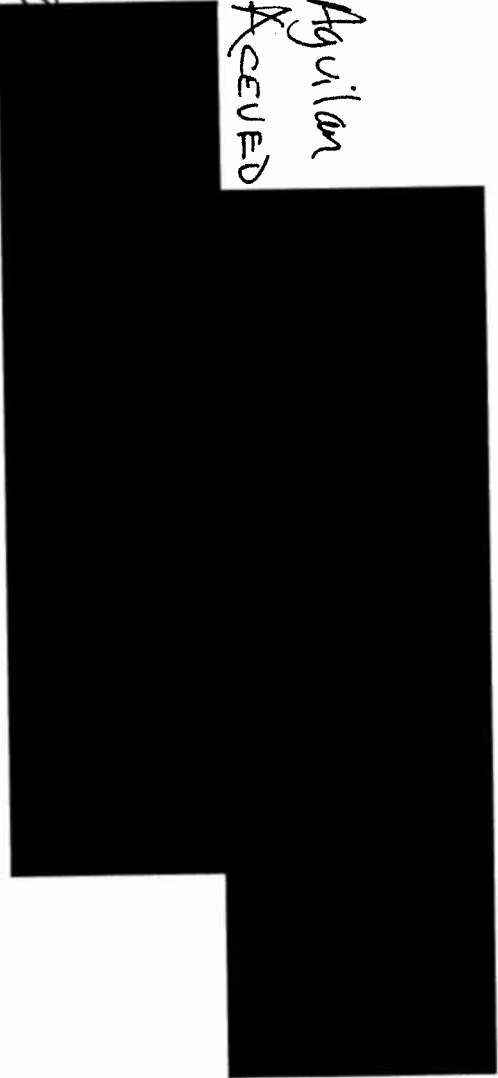
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- 42 Kelly Hongland
- 43 Sen Little
- 44 Tom McNewman
- 45 Noah Hongland
- 46 William M. Baker
- 47 Sean Mc Cain
- 48 Jacqueline Rosen
- 49 Karin Dando -
Hennisch
- 50 James A. Catford
- 51 Ann Skinnova
- 52 Da Ho
- 53 Jeff Doud
- 54 Del Rottstedt
- 55 Paul Guernsey
- 56 Richard SARR
- 57 Gail Steier
- 58 Guldberg Aca
- 59 Ann Far Kas



- ⑥0 ANNETTE A. Aguilan
- ⑥1 JACQUELINE RECEIVED
- ⑥2 Dana Windsor
- ⑥3 Mary Wright
- ⑥4 Elizabeth Sofia



City Redistricting Hearing Testimony

October 4, 2012

Daniel Marks Cohen

New York State Democratic Committeeman, 69th A.D.

██
██

My name is Daniel Marks Cohen, and I am the New York State Democratic Committeeman representing the 69th Assembly District of Manhattan's Upper West Side in the New York State Democratic Committee. The Assemblymember for the 69th is Daniel O'Donnell. I am a lifelong resident of the Upper West Side, my parents live in the district, my wife and I live in the district, and we are raising our newborn son – a third generation West Sider – in it as well. The part of the Upper West Side I live in – between 96th Street and 125th Street, is the poorest portion of the 69th Assembly District (<http://zipskinny.com/zipcompare.php>), it is the least served in terms of services and transportation (<http://www.straphangers.org/pokeyaward/10/>), and has more crime (http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/crime_statistics.shtml).

I believe at least one reason for its consistent and uneven status is that fact that the 69th is cut up into multiple pieces of nine different districts. This was somewhat improved recently by the passage of federal redistricting legislation which redrew the TWO Congressional districts: the 8th by Representative Jerry Nadler, and the 15th by Representative Charlie Rangel; but it was made worse by the THREE State Senate districts: Tom Duane of the 29th, Bill Perkins of the 30th and Adriano Espaillat of the 31st. The latter, the 31st, is particularly egregious, stretching from 184th to 24th Streets along the west coast of Manhattan island, it looks more like the Latin American country of Chile than a proper State Senate district. But sadly, that it not your purview today, and we are stuck with this absurd district for the next ten years.

The recent proposed draft of the council lines is a modest improvement – the northern part of the area I represent is no longer in the 8th district, currently held by councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito from East Harlem, who has served us as well as any person could with a district stretching over such a large geographic area with limited resources. But the area is now split between the 7th and the 9th, councilmembers Robert Jackson and Inez Dickens, respectively. The line to divide the two districts deliberately fractures the community in a way I can only assume was to limit the voting power of the residents in the district so as to not have too much sway in either the 7th, largely seen at a “Washington Heights” seat and the 9th, which is viewed as a “West Harlem” seat.

Plainly put: the northern-most district lines proposed are nonsensical. While I am grateful that residents in my community who lived in the 8th district no longer have to go to 116th Street and Lexington Avenue for help from their councilmember, it is absurd and blatantly disrespectful to divide the area between the 7th and 9th districts along such a random line. The easiest solution is to move the border so that everything west of Central Park and Morningside Park is in the 7th. If this causes the 7th to exceed its capacity, move the line of the 6th district north to pick up some additional voters. I propose that the Commission redraw the lines more naturally, to keep Manhattan Valley's representation on the West Side, where it belongs, rather than as an appendage to another district for incumbency or demographic reasons.

Hearings

From: Dean Dacian [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2012 9:39 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Keep Park West Village Intact!

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of [REDACTED] for almost 47 years (basically my entire life), I find it ridiculous that some arbitrary redistricting decision would cause our community to be split up.

The powers that be should reconsider.

As a devoted member of the community I think we ought to be aligned in Council District 6, currently under Gale Brewer — as one community, so that Park West Village's needs are properly addressed as a whole Community, not a fractured mess...

Cordially,

Dean Dacian

Hearings

From: Elizabeth Kellner [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 8:26 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Lines for 7th, 8th and 9th Districts

My name is Elizabeth Kellner, and I have lived for 36 years at [REDACTED] in the Manhattan Valley neighborhood of the Upper West Side. I testified at the hearing on October 4, and I submit these additional comments for your consideration.

First, I urge the Commission not to divide the Manhattan Valley neighborhood between two City Council districts as is currently proposed, and second, I urge you to include the neighborhood in the Upper West Side Council district where it properly belongs. This has nothing to do with preferring one Councilperson over another as I support and respect all the possible options. The legally mandated objective of the all important redistricting exercise is to ensure fair, adequate and equal representation for communities of interest, especially for historically disenfranchised and under served population groups. It is most emphatically not to accommodate jockeying among candidates for an advantage in seeking future political office, especially when that advantage would be won at the expense of preserving established communities of interest.

I know Manhattan Valley extremely well. Over the 36 years I have lived here our family has been involved with many community groups and active on many issues -- tenants rights, abandonment, zoning and land use, historic preservation, neighborhood schools, block associations and public safety campaigns, to name a few. Manhattan Valley is economically and ethnically diverse. We have a significant number of public housing and subsidized units but also luxury condos and condominiums with everything in between, hostels and hotels, landmarks, historic districts and new construction, a nursing home, senior assisted living facilities, several pre-schools and a head start program, youth programs, a business improvement district, chain stores and mom and pop shops. I could go on and on. We all live, work, play, pray and volunteer side by side, and it works. What the Commission has proposed would slice the community down the middle threatening to undermine those ties that have bound us together. A significant portion of the more affluent and white areas of Manhattan Valley would be peeled off to join the Central Harlem district, while the lower income and predominantly Latino as well as public housing blocks would be sent to the West Harlem/Washington Heights district -- in both cases Manhattan Valley would be a very tiny "tail" the would most certainly not wag the dog. The voices of our diverse and well defined community in city government would be diluted and undermined by the current proposal.

As to my second point, Manhattan Valley is unquestionably part of the Upper West Side historically and geographically - we are 100% within the boundaries of the West Side's CB #7, the 24th Pct and Community School District #3. We are served by the West Side's transportation infrastructure, social service programs, parks and youth athletic leagues. No one, from the real estate developers to the US Postal Service thinks we are anything but part of the Upper West Side.

While I appreciate the challenges facing the Commission and the many constituencies to whom you are accountable, I firmly believe that there is no rational or justifiable basis to support the destructive division of the Manhattan Valley neighborhood. Please keep us in tact. If we cannot join our natural neighbors in the Upper West Side District, please keep us with East Harlem in the 8th district -- we have been joined with that district for several decades now going back to the time when Carolyn Maloney was our City Council representative. We have a successful legacy of representation by the elected officials from that community, including Manhattan Valley's own late, great Phil Reed. I implore you to keep us together as we have been keeping it together. In July 1981 New York Magazine ran a cover story about Manhattan Valley -- it was called Fighting to Save a Neighborhood. We thought we had saved our neighborhood through our joint efforts, so please do not divide us now.

Elizabeth Kellner

Hearings

From: Eula M. Guest [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2012 5:41 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

The Upper Manhattan Empowerment District's proposed map offered as an alternative is even worse. The latter seems to create a special district for Columbia University whereas Columbia University would be the epicenter. Both plans would put Columbia University under the auspices of a majority white population which on its face would be preferable to Columbia University considering the history between Columbia and the African American Community in Harlem.

It would also leave two public housing developments in the 7th District, Grant Houses and Manhattanville Houses, largely occupied by African Americans, vulnerable to predators. It is a commonly known fact that these two developments have been considered for some sort of privatization plan.

However, African Americans are the majority citizen voting-age population in all of Harlem. There are approximately 60,000 African Americans in West Harlem, 52,000 Dominicans and 33,000 whites. In all of the 7th District the African American population is 37%. The Dominican percentage is 47% and the white population is 15%.

Although the Dominican population in the entire 7th District is the majority population the Dominican citizen voting-age population does not have the majority. Having an African American representing the 7th District in city council for 3 terms, coupled with the total African American population in the 7th District, is evidence that the African American "minority" population is significant in this district if not self determining and is a protected group under the Voting Rights Act.

To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Eula M. Guest
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)

Hearings

From: Henriettalye <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2012 7:59 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: October 4, 2012 - Hearing

Testimony by Henrietta Lyle, Chair, Community Board 10

As the Chair of Community Board 10, I have an intimate knowledge of the districts that make up Central Harlem.

A sensible plan recognizes that Harlem truly begins at 110th Street. A Harlem based district needs to remain above 110th Street.

The natural dividing line of the northern part of the district has historically been 155th Street.

As a Board Chair it is important to me that the lines maintain at least some adherence to the community districts lines which can universally recognized as definitional for community districts.

A district that attempts to flagrantly cross those lines, as does the 7th Councilmanic district proposed in the Commission's initial plan, is totally inappropriate and drafts together to communities that are fundamentally different.

Hearings

From: judith baldwin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 8:07 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: PWV

Park West Village (PWV) should remain *intact*. We are a community. Keep it that way.

October 31, 2012
(Edited and Revised on November 1, 2012)

TO: THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
And
New York City Districting Commission

Attention: Lindsey Quock, Case manager for New York County Redistricting - DOJ
Jonathan Ettricks, Director of Community Outreach – NYC Districting Commission

OFFICIAL RESPONSE ***OPPOSING*** THE NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING
COMMISSION'S REDISTRICTING PROPOSAL FOR COUNCILMANIC DISTRICTS
IN NEW YORK CITY. THIS RESPONSE ALSO ***OPPOSES*** THE UPPER
MANHATTAN EMPOWERMENT DISTRICT PROPOSAL
(Legal Points)

BY JULIUS TAJIDDIN
(Resident of West Harlem, New York, USA
Located in Council manic District 7)

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, as amended in 1982, largely controls how council manic district lines can be drawn. It prohibits any procedure that results in the denial or abridgment of anyone's right to vote based on race, color, or minority language status.

It also prohibits laws or practices that deny minority voters an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice.

A violation of this type is sometimes called "vote dilution."

The Black electorate of West Harlem in New York City Council District 7, as well as other Black neighborhoods in the 7th Council District, is protected under Section 2, as I will further explain below.

According to the **Center of Urban Research**, as of 2010, according to the U.S. Census Report of 2010, West Harlem's main plurality is:

- African American – 60,000/ (42%)
- "Hispanics"/Dominicans – 52,000/ (34%)
- "White" – 33,000/ (22%)

This totals approximately 144,000 residents in West Harlem. Most of that total is located in Council manic District 7. However, District 7's total population is under 170,000. Percentage wise that comes to:

- "Hispanics"/Dominicans – 47%

- African Americans – 37%
- “White” – 15%

The Commission’s redistricting plan, and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment District proposal, do not consider this data, which would make such plans defective and unconstitutional on their face. The data they seem to work with is for the purpose of creating a population of 160,000 – 170,000 people per district. Not only is that not the law, the outcome of plurality arrangement is suspicious. This response deals with Upper Manhattan, particular Council Districts 7, 9, 10 and 8. (> Added)

The UMED plan seeks to dilute the African American population in the 7th District down to 17.60% and raise the white population to 31.20% and the Dominican population to 41.50%. However, in truth when considering these figures such plan actually puts the political power with the white population group because the Dominican population would not have a higher citizen voting-age population than the white population with these percentages. (> Added) Perhaps they could be just a bit higher than the African American population. But based on election results over the last decade the Black population demonstrates that it has the majority in citizen voting-age population in the 7th District. (*Infra, pages 2-5*) (> Added)

The Commission’s redistricting plan puts the Dominican group higher at 51%. However, the same argument as above would still apply because the white population would be set at 34% and the African American population is reduced to 17%.

I will explain further down how both plans intend to dilute the African American population, as well as the group’s political influence in the 7th District and Harlem.

Federal Relief From Gerrymandering

Section 2 provides some relief from such tactics. It gives voters the right to turn to the courts if, for example, a district could be drawn to give a minority community the opportunity to elect its candidate of choice, but the district lines instead split the community up in separate districts where its voting power is diluted.

When litigants challenge a redistricting plan or put a plan under Section 2, asserting that districts could be drawn to preserve minority-voting power that is otherwise diluted, they must first show that:

- A minority population is sufficiently geographically compact (that is, living close together) that it would make sense to draw a district containing it;
- The minority population (usually, the citizen voting-age minority population) is large enough to be more than half of a district-sized number of people;
- The minority population is “politically cohesive” – that is, it would usually vote as a bloc for the same favored candidate;

- The majority population would usually vote as a bloc for a different candidate, so that it would usually be able to defeat the minority-preferred candidate, if the minority population were fragmented among several districts.

The African American population is sufficiently geographically compact in the West Harlem Neighborhood in the 7th Council District

The Black population in West Harlem is sufficiently geographically compact. They are also the majority of WH's plurality. West Harlem consists of Morningside Heights, Manhattanville and Hamilton Heights. All three of those areas are contiguously joined together. While it is true that a small part of Morningside Heights is in the 9th Council District (still in West Harlem) and some of Central Harlem is in the 7th Council District instead of the 9th, most of West Harlem is in the 7th Council District.

However, it makes perfect sense for the 7th and 9th Districts to overlap because these neighborhoods are a part of the aggregate total land area of Harlem, which together has a rich cultural and political history. Such history is mostly a Black History. And for reasons that are overwhelmingly documented, Harlem became the Mecca of Black America through a natural and exiled migration. Therefore on this ground alone Harlem's Black population and political influence in the Western, Central and Eastern parts should not be diluted.

It would also make sense to maintain or draw a district containing the African American population. A district has been drawn containing the African American population in West Harlem in the 7th Council District.

Opponents will argue that such a district is the 9th Council District which primarily contains Central Harlem and redistricting plans, such as the UMED and Commission's plans, have created a [stronger] district containing an African American population. However, a Black community should not be relegated to just one district if it has naturally evolved to being in three contiguous districts. (> Added)

Whites have their contiguous districts lined up like ducks and Dominicans are trying to keep their cohesiveness within multiple contiguous districts. (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.)

It doesn't matter that there is a 22% white population in West Harlem. Id. Blacks have always been a minority group in predominantly white neighborhoods for years or not in them at all. Now that Harlem is demographically changing a little doesn't mean that the Black population has to get in last place and give up their political power in the 7th District or Harlem, especially because of Harlem's rich Black history. Id. Nor should it be realistically argued for a district that contains one ethnic group, especially in New York City. Even in Harlem.

But certainly Black people can be the majority or citizen voting-age majority in Harlem or in all three districts containing parts of Harlem: West, Central and East, since it's been that way for decades. Id. (> Added) (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.)

And the Black population can be the majority citizen voting-age population in the 7th District, because most of the districts have between 150,000-170,000 people in each district, including the 7th District. It is important to emphasize that most districts have a plurality of at least three ethnic/racial groups. The top three in many districts within Manhattan have the white population leading, "Hispanics" being next and African American being last. Examples: 50/40/10; 55/30/15 or 60/35/5. Some areas it is 75/20/5 or even 80/15/5. If the African American populations in those areas asked for their own districts based on the fact that there is a Black population south of one district and such community seems to extend to the north of an adjacent district they would not be taking seriously if even responded to at all. (> Added)

And if any population shift has occurred, as asserted by certain people, no population which was a majority or citizen voting-age population majority in such districts lost its political cohesiveness or majority status as a result of such population shift, thereby holding on as the leading population and citizen-voting age population. At least this is true in Upper Manhattan. Therefore to make up for a loss in numbers or increase a population size of a particular minority group who still has majority or citizen voting-age majority status in the district even with such population shift does not warrant Black people to now get on the back of the bus in the 7th District. Nor should the Black population be satisfied holding power in one district in upper Manhattan, especially Harlem. (> Added)

The citizen voting-age minority population in the 7th District is large enough to be retained and remain in the 7th District

Although the Black population in the 7th District is less than half of a district-sized number of people (app. < 170,000), and when litigants who challenge a redistricting plan under Section 2 the courts and Justice Department will look to see if a population is large enough to be more than half of a district-sized number of people (Id.), the other plurality is not more than half either. Id. Nor does such plurality have more citizen voting-age populations than the Black population and should not warrant that a district be drawn to make them more than half or either one a majority citizen voting-age population over the Black citizen voting-age population just because the 10th Council District had a decrease in its population over the last 10 years that puts it slightly under 140,000. * Id. (> Added)

(I would strongly argue that when it comes to the citizen voting-age population in the 7th Council District the African American citizen voting-age population is over 50% of such population in the 7th District.) (> Added)*

However, the African American population and Dominican population have more in common with each other than with any other racial group in the 7th District. They both

noticeably have African ancestry; they both share a history where Europeans enslaved their ancestors and such slavery ended in the 19th Century; they both speak the language of their conquerors. Finally, their diets, music and cultures have more similarities than unfamiliar likenesses.

Therefore, when looking at the two groups in a larger context the differences between the two are subtle and such differences are more like a sub-culture within a larger culture.

Racially, they are very much the same, although the diversity of races as in America is worldwide, and such diversity is even with the Dominican people. But most of the Dominicans in New York are of African Descent.

And most of the Dominicans who are eligible to vote in Harlem have demonstrated that they are similar in political thinking. The fact that the same African American has held the 7th Councilmanic District seat for almost 12 years proves that. Id. (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.)

Further proof is that incumbent U.S. Representative Charlie Rangel won the primary on June 26, 2012 in the newly formed 13th Congressional District after the former 15th Congressional District's boundary lines were redrawn and now included a strong majority Dominican population over rival Dominican-born candidate Adriano Espaillat.

The minority population is "politically cohesive"

The Black population in West Harlem and other parts of the 7th District has demonstrated that it is politically cohesive. But also, the majority of the population who are of African descent (includes Dominicans) and eligible to vote do so as a bloc for the same favored candidate. Id. (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.)

The majority population would usually vote as a bloc for a different candidate

Taking the Black "minority" population of West Harlem and other areas of the 7th Councilmanic District and dividing them into Southern District 10, District 7 and District 9, whereas the Black population in the 7th District would be reduced to 17% from 37%, would weaken the Black voting power in District 7 and make it virtually impossible for a Black candidate who could win a council seat in the 7th to win or extremely difficult, even with unity from the Dominican community. This is in spite of a Black president.
(> Added)

In most cases, as we see from real life, a white majority citizen voting-age population in District 7, or any other district in York City, would not produce a Black candidate.

To prove this point, in an article out of the **Columbia Spectator**, “**Broadway Dems push to unify Morningside into single City Council district**,” published September 21, 2012, Edward Sullivan, former New York State Assembly Member of the 69th Assembly District, is quoted as saying, “*We would like to have the ability to vote for a candidate who lives amongst us. We all consider ourselves part of the same community.*”

[<http://www.columbiaspectator.com/2012/09/21/broadway-dems-push-unify-morningside-single-city-council-district>]

The **Broadway Democrats** is a political club that consists primarily, if not entirely, of white members. Mr. Sullivan is white and the community *he speaks* of is from West 96th to 125th streets, between the Hudson River and Central Park West. If that area were made into a district it would have a white majority population. Of course anyone who knows the boundary lines Mr. Sullivan speaks of, such district would have a Black population. But with the inclusion of Manhattan Valley and the 22% white population in Morningside Heights such district would be an overwhelming majority population.

Deducing from these facts Mr. Sullivan might as well have said, “**We want to be able to elect a white candidate and we want political control of certain parts of Harlem where we are starting to live.**”

When carefully analyzing all of the particulars it’s not really about a community of like minds or race running contiguously into multiple districts (Grant Houses located on 125th and Broadway – Morningside Avenue and consisting primarily of African Americans would interrupt that flow) but trying to create a district or take over one by gerrymandering because you have an interest in an particular area. That could be development interests or land grab interests.

To illustrate this point, according to the article, Democratic District Leader Curtis Arluck expressed that, keeping the district aligned with the Hudson River would maintain the “real locus” of the district and allow all three Columbia campuses—Morningside, Manhattanville, and Medical—to remain within the same district. If the Columbia Spectator can be relied on such statement supports my position about Columbia University wanting control of a district where its campuses are situated. (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.) (> Added)

Getting back to the percentages of the actual district proposed by the Commission, even though I gave good examples and demonstrated that there could be strong political unity among Black Americans and Afro-Dominicans there are some Dominicans who have political ambition who would rather not see such unity. This is a reality. Just like there are some people in the African American community I’m sure that may not want to see such unity because they might feel threatened and are insecure because they too have political ambition. As a result there are some that would take advantage of this split of the African American community in the 7th District and bring division. (> Added)

When a community is set up a certain way and on its face seems fair, especially with Harlem’s history, Id., having people suggest or operate in a manner to undermine a particular population that has been established for years brings about suspicion. Here lies

an obvious appearance of impropriety. Therefore, with the facts that have been laid out in this document, these redistricting plans must not get preclearance from the Justice Department.

Section 5 of The Voting Rights Act

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act also addresses discrimination, but works a little differently. It includes covering changes to district lines.

New district plans will only be pre-cleared by the Justice Department if they (1) are not intended to dilute racial and language minority votes, and (2) leave racial and language minority voters no worse off than they were before redistricting, using old district lines but new population data.

The Commission and UMED's redistricting plans would leave 17.60 % of the Black voters in West Harlem and the 7th Council District a lot worse off than they are now. In fact *a lot worse* is an understatement.

Reducing the Black population by more than half in the 7th District and making them subject to leadership not of their choice by bolstering the white population up to 31-34% is an egregious maneuver. Even the chance of having a Dominican council representative in the 7th District is slim with the Dominican population percentage being structured at 41% (under the UMED plan) or 51% under the Commission's proposed map because the Dominican citizen voting-age population would be much lower than 41 or 51%. Maintaining the Dominican population as the majority in both plans where one increases the size a little bit and one reduces the size more than a bit is a red herring. (> Added)

Cutting the Black population out of the Northern part of 7th District (Inwood) – which currently is a part of the 37% African American population in the 7th District and putting them in the 10th Council District, a largely Dominican population, is an egregious maneuver.

To suggest that it's okay to split the African American population of the 7th District into three districts, when by their presence West Harlem can retain a strong Black cultural and political base and keep the aggregate area of Harlem, also known as The Village of Harlem, which is also Central Harlem and East Harlem, largely a Black influenced neighborhood – culturally, politically and historically is an insult to the African American population in Harlem period!

The majority of West Harlem (District 7 residents) and other District 7 residents testified on October 2, 2012 at a District Commission hearing regarding the Commission's proposed redistricting map, held at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and rejected both maps, in spite of Council Woman Inez Dicken's (of the 9th Council District) passionate presentation of the UMED Redistricting Plan.

Council member Robert Jackson, the present council member of the 7th District urged the Commission to keep the boundary lines in Upper Manhattan unchanged.

I will say this, Council Member Inez Dickens charged the Commission with purposely dividing the community and causing everyone to land grab to try to get as much for their district that they can get away with for fear of such power being vulnerable and taken away.

Hence, these plans dilute the Black vote in West Harlem in the 7th District and other parts of the 7th District and puts pockets of such Black community in West Harlem in the 7th District and other parts of the 7th District vulnerable to predators. Id. and (Supra, Page 6, 5th Para)

How Candidates Can Be Discriminated Against As a Result of Violating Section 5

In the Brennan Center for Justice, A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting 2010 Edition, It was determined that because Barack Obama had been carved out of a congressional district he previously ran for back in 2000 such redistricting was unfair.

Why? That's because Obama was more than 30% of the vote against incumbent Bobby Rush and such strong showing after a relatively hasty campaign suggested that the stage was set for a real duel in a potential rematch.

Similarly, I ran against Robert Jackson in 2009 for his council manic seat in District 7. Although I lost, there is an inclination that I would run again in 2013 because he will be term limited and I demonstrate a strong possibility of winning that vacant seat. Id. (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.)

However, the Commission's proposed map carves me out of the district not by blocks, but by cutting through an alley and going around the block where I live. Id. (See Response of Julius Tajiddin sent by email dated October 30, 2012.)

Moreover, the Commission's district weakens the Black electorate in the District 7 and creates a reformed district that would create the following results: The White section of Morningside Heights, which is primarily between W. 110th Street and W. 125th Street, north to south and Morningside Drive and Riverside Drive, east to west, is added to the 7th District. The Commission also adds below W. 110th Street down to W. 97th Street, north to south, between Riverside Drive and Amsterdam Avenue (up to W. 104th Street) then to Columbus Avenue, with a couple of ins and out carvings along the way down to W. 97th Street, an area known as Manhattan Valley, also primarily white.

The Potential For A Majority White Citizen Voting Age Population in the 7th District

The majority of this new area for the 7th District would be mainly white and "Hispanic."

The Northern part of the 7th District under this proposal (lower Washington Heights) incorporates large sections of Hispanic neighborhoods that weren't in the district before. It ends at W. 182nd Street but is carved in such a way to diminish what little of the Black population in that area that was in the 7th District.

The Black population percentage in the 7th District under the Commission's proposed map is down to 17% from 37%. The "Hispanic" population has been increased to about 51%, which doesn't reflect the true percentage of citizen voting-age population with such community. And the white population in the 7th District under this plan is increased to 34%.

Taking into consideration all of these facts the white population in this new 7th District is likely the stronger population. But certainly the Black voting age population in the 7th District has been diluted under this plan.

Out of the plurality consisting of "Hispanics" (Dominicans), Black and White such placement is now Hispanic, White and Black. Columbia University's expansion is in the section of the 7th District known as Manhattanville, which under the current lines is considered a Black neighborhood in the 7th District.

Columbia's expansion into Manhattanville was very contested between Manhattanville and other West Harlem residents, including myself, because at the time Columbia had not shown a willingness to offer a meaningful community benefits agreement to the [community] in exchange for a profitable rezoning. Eminent Domain was also used by the Empire State Developments Corporation to give Columbia full control of 17 acres of land in Manhattanville. Columbia had purchased 15 of those acres by other means, which members of the community alleged was coerced. A community Benefits Agreement was finally agreed to well after the rezoning and condemnation of such private property. (> Added)

Such agreement is currently under the pressure and watchful eye of Manhattanville and West Harlem residents, with some Northern Morningside residents very much involved.

At a recent public meeting held by the West Harlem Local Development Corporation, a corporation established to be the representatives of the Community Benefits Agreement between Columbia and the West Harlem Community and other neighboring local communities (October 25, 2012) the majority of the attendees from the public were Black.

A demographic shift in the 7th District by redistricting can change the politics of this situation. It is a realistic perception that Columbia University would want to be in a district that has white leadership and a citizen voting-age population that is majority white rather than have Black council manic representation with a citizen voting-age population that is majority Black, especially in light of the adversity between such Black community and Columbia University.

This I believes violates Section 2 and Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Moreover, many of the benefits that 7th Council District residents fought for are materializing, i.e., a public school, created by Columbia University and the Department of Education, currently situated in the 7th Council District, would be placed in the 9th Council District.

Also the Local Development Corporation membership would change drastically. Currently many members of the Corporation are 7th Council District residents. That would change by virtue of sections of West Harlem being put in the 9th Council District. Change could also happen because of the possibility of a white council member representing the 7th District. The corporation is set up to include council member appointees. Thus, more whites would likely be in the Local Development Corporation than Blacks because of this redistricting. However, the fight over benefits was largely waged between the Black community and Columbia.

Benefactors of such agreement also included Grant Houses and Manhattanville Houses, two public housing developments in the 7th Council District. These two developments are left in the 7th Council District under both plans. Id.

However, such separation from their constituents places them in a vulnerable position. It is more than rumor that the powers that be want to privatize public housing. A white controlled district with a population having different interests than a Black population brings about all types of dissatisfying consequences, as far as the Black population is concerned. The community benefits agreement that the present 7th District residents bargained for can get complicated with a new political power base and controlling white population.

But why shouldn't the current 7th District residents be in the position of control over a benefits agreement that they bargained for?

The conclusion is that these redistricting plans will likely put the Black population in the 7th District worse off than they are now.

Other Law Relating to Redistricting

Notwithstanding federal law, the New York City Charter, at Section 52, sets criteria for redistricting. It includes keeping intact neighborhoods and communities with racial, economic, ethnic, religious and cultural ties. West Harlem, a sub-culture of Harlem is such community.

It also includes that districts shall be compact and should be no more than twice as long as it is wide. The Commission's plan and UMED's plan made District 7 like a rail car, especially the UMED Plan. There was no consideration for the Black electorate of West Harlem. Such plans bolster the White and Hispanic communities, while in West Harlem Blacks are the majority. Although, it is argued here that bringing the Dominican population to 51% under the Commission's plan and 41% in the UMED plan is a smoke screen. Id.

Conclusion

The plans ignore that Harlem has a Black American History, culture and style that's even more connected by spirituality and economy. And this connection has been intact for over 100 years. Harlem includes West Harlem, but for purposes of districts West Harlem, the way it is currently set up, must remain intact in District 7. That's because it is a protected community due its controlling population. Id.

But not only is West Harlem such a protected community, so is Central Harlem and East Harlem, from River to River. "Districtly" speaking, that's the 7th, 9th and 8th Districts, all three, running contiguously and overlapping, and being under a "Black" political influence. That's because it's been that way for decades and such a result happened by way of natural migration.

End

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Leah Holzel

[REDACTED]
New York, NY [REDACTED]

DISTRICT 7

October 4, 2012

To whom it may concern,

This past Tuesday, my husband and I celebrated our one year anniversary in our home in the Inwood section of Manhattan. We have never owned before and moved here from the upper east side where we had each resided for over 20 years, and where my husband has a professional practice.

I am opposed to the redistricting plan which would sever our representational ties with the fundamental cultural and educational institutions that anchor district 7 as it currently exists. Broadway serves as long-defined, well-entrenched, organic divide. Western Inwood is becoming a sophisticated, thriving and upwardly mobile community.

The lines proposed by the City Council would take political influence away from northern Manhattan by putting most of it into one district, and we would lose power and influence.

I agree with Zead Ramadan, a former chair of Community Board 12, who believes that the center of gravity is going to shift down to western Harlem. And we would lose a lot of voice.

Right now, we have two council members who also share the land area pretty equally, so when they advocate for millions of dollars of resources, they're bringing it to our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Leah Holzel

My name is Lizabeth Sostre and I live in Manhattan Valley. Manhattan Valley runs from 100th to 110th Street east of Amsterdam to Central Park. I have lived in the same building on West 109th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus since 1976. That is 36 years. However, when people ask me where I live, I tell them I live in the Upper West Side, not Manhattan Valley. That is at the heart of the redistricting issue.

My current councilmanic district (Council District 8) attaches me to East Harlem. East Harlem is on the other side of Central Park and Central Park is pretty big. This has denied me easy access to my Councilmember's office. So what I do when I have any local issues is go to Assemblymember Danny O'Donnell's office which is on West, not East, 104th Street. He is very nice and tries his best to help, but actually I should be going to my Councilmember's office. But I won't because it is too time consuming. It takes too long to get there.

The proposed lines detach me from East Harlem (thank you) but still do not attach me to the Upper West Side (proposed Council District 7) where I belong. Instead, I am now attached to the proposed Council District 9. My police precinct is in the proposed Council District 7. The fire department responsible for my building is in the proposed Council District 7. The community board for my area is in the proposed Council District 7.

Why am I still cut out? Something is very wrong here. I know you can fix this. I hope you do.

Testimony before
The New York City Districting Commission

October 4, 2012

by Mark D. Levine

Thank you. My name is Mark Levine, and I am a Democratic District Leader from the 71st Assembly District in Washington Heights. I am here to provide feedback on the drawing of the 7th and 10th Councilmanic districts uptown.

In short, the commission's first proposal for these districts was simply terrible. There are a few principles that most New Yorkers expect the Commission to be mindful of in drawing our new maps: 1) there should be an effort to keep together communities of common interest, 2) minority voting power should be protected, and 3) the basic notion of fairness should be adhered to.

Unfortunately, when it comes to Northern Manhattan, the Commission's preliminary plan failed on each of these counts.

First, the plan rips apart Northern Manhattan neighborhoods along the Hudson--namely Hamilton Heights, Washington Heights, and Inwood--areas with deep ties and a decades-long history of common representation in the 7th Council district, areas that remain connected today in the Assembly and Senate districts. I and many other testified about the nature of these deep ties in the August hearing so I won't repeat myself on this today, but suffice to say that these waterfront neighborhoods are connected by common parks and transit lines, a common school district, the presence of Columbia University campuses, similarly high rates of homeownership, and much more. That's why every effort should be made to keep these waterfront neighborhoods together in a common district.

Second, the Commission's preliminary plan dramatically dilutes Latino voting power in the 10th District, which traditionally has been overwhelmingly Latino. Under the new plan the portion of Latinos among regular votes in a Democratic primary would drop to 51%. I am talking about the so-called "prime Dems" number, which is far more relevant to the outcome of elections than raw census numbers. And if current demographic trends continue uptown than your proposal would ensure that Latinos would cease to be a majority of primary voters in the 10th district in just a few short years.

And lest you think that there were compensating gains for Latino voting power in the newly

drawn 7th, the numbers there are even weaker, with Latinos making us just 30% of regular primary voters.

And finally there is the issue of fairness. As many have already pointed out, the Commission's proposal packs in 5% more voters to almost every Manhattan District as compared to the city-wide average. This is exactly the same tactic employed by State Senate Republicans, who pack in more voters downstate to dilute our voting power--and we downstaters have rightly been highly critical of this. That fact is that Manhattan's population has *grown* relative to the rest of the city and we should see a corresponding increase in representation here. Instead we are losing one Council seat to the Bronx.

And this practice of over-packing directly affects the Washington Heights area, where the extra growth has made the contortions in the 7th and 10th districts even worse.

None of this has to happen. The commission has received multiple proposed maps that comply with every legal obligation, avoid the weaknesses of the current proposal, and leave the uptown districts largely intact. I urge you take these suggestions and jettison your preliminary draft plan.

Thank you

NYC Redistricting Manhattan Hearing
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
Testimony by Monique Ndigo Washington
Thursday, October 4, 2012

Good evening members of the NYC Districting Commission. My name is Monique Ndigo Washington. I am the President of the Terrace Apartments Tenants Association, which include four buildings near the southern tip of District 7. I am here to lend my voice as a member of the Harlem community and join with others to ensure that the boundaries of District 7 are drawn to meet the legal criteria set forth by the New York City Charter, the Voting Rights Act and the Justice Department.

I represent four generations of residing in West Harlem. Let me take a quick moment to explain why this is significant. If you ask any person anywhere in the world, if they ever heard of Harlem, I'm sure their answer would be a resounding yes. Harlem is known for its unique culture, history and heritage. We have given rise to artists, writers and activists. Harlem was the place to see and be seen. However, that dirty word gentrification arrived some twenty years ago and has threatened to change and erase our presence and history.

I have witnessed landlords evict tenants illegally from rent stabilized apartments and Mitchell-lama housing so they can increase their rents and secure market rates. Small business owners have suffered the same fate and have had to close their doors because they are unable to compete with big box retail stores, banks, franchises and Columbia University (ie. Starbucks, Duane Reade and Chase). Capitalism, real estate and greed are at the root of this displacement and land grab. Mobay Restaurant, Harlem Lanes and Huelman Bookstore are among the most recent businesses who had to shut their doors. Some of the black owned businesses who have remained on the 125th Street corridor have relocated more than once and travelled further east. There is also a huge concern about the future of our vendors, since Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to rezone 125th Street passed.

I would like to call your attention to an important aspect that occurred with the drafting of the preliminary lines. On the eastern border of St. Nicholas Avenue cuts across at 128th Street to Convent Avenue and down to 123rd Street. This line literally cuts thru an alley and is sandwiched between a building and where St. Nicholas Park ends. Why would the line stop at 128th St. and not extend to 127th Street where St. Nicholas Avenue ends or extend further down to 123rd St. Is it to cut my house (apartment bldg.) out of District 7? After learning that I was not the only person and potential candidate who experienced this in District 7 (also in Brooklyn), I can't help but be suspicious and conclude that this was intentionally and absolutely political. Is this an attempt to silence the voice of grassroots and possible elected representation for the upcoming 2013 City Council race? Representation that would challenge the political machine and buck the status quo?

As the founder of my group, Take Back Our City (TBOC), I/we ask that you take a look at this issue closely and when you consider drawing these lines and strive to keep a balance between meeting the criteria outlined by the Justice Department to account for the current population in this District and the adjoining two districts (8 and 9 respectively), be reminded that the residents of this community share a common bond. We send our children to the schools in the area, shop in the area, participate in civic and religious organizations and support our local institutions. We hope our presence will be protected and maintained.

Thank you for your time and I hope you will include my testimony as you discuss and deliberate over the next few months. We, the people have a voice and will not be silenced.

**TESTIMONY OF NICK PRIGO
ELECTRONICALLY DELIVERED TO THE
NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4TH - 5:30PM - 9:00PM
SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE
515 MALCOLM X BOULEVARD
NEW YORK, NY 10037

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony. My name is Nick Prigo and I am the Male Democratic District Leader for the 69th Assembly District, Part B and the Housing Committee Co-Chair of Manhattan's Community Board 7.

I commend the effort made by the commission thus far in the production of its draft map and want to recommend to you a couple of simple, yet critical, changes that would improve upon it. My home area, the northern reaches of the Upper West Side and Morningside Heights, has been unnecessarily divided into multiple council districts. I urge the commission to correct this mistake and unify these neighborhoods into a single district.

Highlighting the most egregious result of this separation is the division of the Park West Village complex at the southern end of the draft map's CD7 and CD9. Park West Village is a seven building complex comprising two super-blocks, with an active tenant association, and a 60-year history of unified community activism. It is critical that this complex, bounded by Columbus Ave, Central Park West, West 97th Street and West 100th Street, stays unified.

The unification of this territory would be best served by moving the southern border of the draft CD9 up to West 110th Street and snaking the western border along Morningside Park up through Columbia University. Furthermore, there may be opportunities to move the northern boundary of CD6 north a few blocks to help accommodate this unification.

Hearings

From: Sharonne Salaan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2012 6:18 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

Greetings,

Do not change the NYC councilmanic boundary lines for Northern Manhattan.

The African American citizen voting-age population would be greatly diminished in the 7th Council District under this proposed map and the shift of political influence would be given to a white citizen voting-age population.

The Upper Manhattan Empowerment District's proposed map offered as an alternative is even worse. The latter seems to create a special district for Columbia University whereas Columbia University would be the epicenter. Both plans would put Columbia University under the auspices of a majority white population which on its face would be preferable to Columbia University considering the history between Columbia and the African American Community in Harlem.

It would also leave two public housing developments in the 7th District, Grant Houses and Manhattanville Houses, largely occupied by African Americans, vulnerable to predators. It is a commonly known fact that these two developments have been considered for some sort of privatization plan.

However, African Americans are the majority citizen voting-age population in all of Harlem. There are approximately 60,000 African Americans in West Harlem, 52,000 Dominicans and 33,000 whites. In all of the 7th District the African American population is 37%. The Dominican percentage is 47% and the white population is 15%.

Although the Dominican population in the entire 7th District is the majority population the Dominican citizen voting-age population does not have the majority. Having an African American representing the 7th District in city council for 3 terms, coupled with the total African American population in the 7th District, is evidence that the African American "minority" population is significant in this district if not self determining and is a protected group under the Voting Rights Act.

To reduce the African American population to 17% (both proposed maps) putting such group at the bottom of the top three ethnic groups by drawing into the 7th District a white neighborhood, carving a large percentage of the Black population in West Harlem out of the 7th District and putting them into the 9th District and cutting out African American neighborhoods in Lower Washington Heights is gerrymandering at its best.

Furthermore, these new boundary lines seem to purposely carve out the residences of potential African American candidates for the 7th Council District in the 2013 councilmanic race, which will be open in 2013. Particularly, one of the candidates ran in 2009 and there is a logical inclination that he would run again, especially since the council seat will be opened in 2013.

Therefore we ask that the Commission preserve the majority "minority" voting power that is already in place in the 7th District. Altering other Upper Manhattan Districts to compensate for an unequal district population

because of population shifts at the expense of the "minority" voting power in the 7th District is not fair. Those districts do not lose their actual "minority" voting power.

The 7th District meets all of the criteria to preserve its "minority" voting power population under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and such proposed maps violate both Sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

Sharonne Salaan
New York, New York

Note: this email was sent as part of a petition started on Change.org, viewable at <http://www.change.org/petitions/new-york-city-districting-commission-do-not-change-the-nyc-councilmanic-boundary-lines-for-northern-manhattan>. To respond, [click here](#)