

Hearings

From: Aresh Javadi <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 5:42 PM
To: Hearings
Cc: Melissa Mark-Viverito
Subject: Redrawing District 8 - Unity Map

I Aresh Javadi, working in El Barrio and running a Summer Camp in district 8 in the South Bronx and having lived there, strongly urge the Commission to use the Unity Map proposal as a framework for re-drawing District 8. This proposal, created by a coalition of groups including LatinoJustice PRLDEF, keeps El Barrio whole and preserves the Manhattan Valley portion of the district, while still doubling the area covered in the Bronx to include almost the entirety of Mott Haven.

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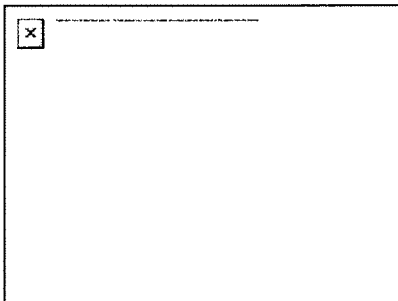
Aresh Javadi,
c o - f o u n d e r
M o r e G a r d e n s !

NY City Community Garden
Coalition - Board Member

cellphone: (917) [REDACTED]
moregardens.org
nyccgc.org

" "

More
Gardens!
More Trees!
New York City loves to breathe!



TO: NYC Redistricting Commission

FROM: Blanca Vazquez, Manhattan Valley Preservation Coalition, co-chair

DATE: Oct. 5, 2012

RE: District 8 Redistricting Proposal

VIA: hearings@districting.nyc.gov

The NYC Redistricting Commission did not take into the account the historical integrity of district 8 and the unity of its community, especially for my neighborhood, the Manhattan Valley portion. I am co-chair of the Manhattan Valley Preservation Coalition. The creation and work of MVPC is a testament to our history of struggle, especially when it comes to housing.

Many of us have been in this mixed-income community for more than 30 years. We are here because in the 60s and 70s we fought for affordable housing, we did sweat equity and volunteer work, we organized as tenant associations and later as HDFC's so that we could remain mixed income and family friendly. We have rich neighbors to the West and low- and middle-income neighbors to the South. We have restaurants and bodega; none of that was preserved without effort. **The decision to break up MV is a poor one and so is the timing.**

We are undergoing another intense gentrification phase, this time the threat is from investment capital coming into an affordable area before it gets as super hot and expensive as the Upper East Side. With all due respect to my alma mater, Columbia University's new campus project squeezes out local businesses, restaurants and families. We have valued and protected all that makes MV unique and livable, we have resisted being recast and rearranged by powerful interests such as the Extel Corporation that seek to make this area exclusive and exclusionary. Working with community board 7, **MV organizations have succeeded in limiting high rise development** to 12 stories on the broad streets and 7 stories on the side streets. From the outside it looks like we are being punished for our success. It sends a message to organizations and neighbors that have had success in curtailing development that instead of being applauded for being good neighbors and good citizens, we will be reorganized, tearing apart working relationships we've had for years.

The new boundaries also dilute the strength of a mixed-income community and disenfranchises in particular the minorities in the district, Latinos and African Americans who have voice and vote in the longstanding organizations we have forged in tenant associations, HDFCs, and community organizations. It privileges those with big pockets and political power. MV had a history and real integrity. We have an excellent city councilperson able to unite the community by developing ties with its organizations and that stands out as representing the people who live here, **all** the

people. We don't appreciate how this recommendation comes at the expense of the civil rights goals which created the district: to give voice to the majority not in power — people of color in NYC. It disenfranchises the Latinos and African Americans and other minorities that give the neighborhood a special mixed character that was once more common in this city.

We **are** Manhattan Valley, we have been saying it with pride for decades; this proposal dismantles a living vibrant community. It should not stand.

Blanca Vazquez


NY, NY 10025

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: Tato Torres [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2012 5:11 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Proposed lines to District 8

My name is Carlos Torres and I am a member of the East Harlem community.

The proposed lines to District 8 slice and dice our community in an arbitrary and suspiciously disrespectful manner, which raises many logical questions about the real intentions of those obviously pulling strings and disgracefully playing political games to benefit particular agendas and NOT the welfare of it's constituents. The proposed lines rip apart and disenfranchise communities with deep roots, strong ties and a long history of common political representation. There's no logical explanation that I, or anyone else I know in the community can see, to justify how District 8 is intended to be carved up to clearly satisfy "political" interests outside and well beyond those of the District and it's constituents. No well-respected or self-respecting resident or leader in District 8 agrees with or approves the proposed redistricting lines and that should NOT be ignored.

The public process surrounding these proposed district lines is highly suspicious and questionable. It lacks proper consideration and respect for the common interest and history that binds District 8's constituents and obviously benefits the particular interest of those who for one reason or another, feel threatened by these bonds and the leadership that represents us.

While it is understandable that neighboring districts have changed demographically, and that there may be a need to facilitate opportunity for continued ethnic minority representation in the City Council, it is NOT so clear and transparent that the proposed lines actually address these needs fairly. And they certainly do NOT seem to be proposed with the well-intended purpose of keeping communities or "groups of common interest" together, as required by the City Charter. In fact it is quite evident that the proposed lines actually violate the City Charter and certainly do NOT demonstrate the intention to protect our common interests. The nebulous intentions of those promoting these changes is made even more evident by their blatant disregard of the community's own voice and lack of interest and consideration for alternatives such as the Unity Map developed and proposed by a coalition of independent entities, which evidently does have the best interest of the community of District 8 as it's intention.

The current process is clearly and obviously flawed, arbitrary and those directly involved and those indirectly influencing it, are simply not interested in our common interests as a community. We seriously demand that the Commission reflects upon it's behavior and actually take into consideration the welfare of every community in every district without favoring particular political agendas. Let your conscience lead you to BE HONEST and BE FAIR as you are supposed to be.

Thank You,

Carlos J. Torres

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: Celia Ramirez [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 14, 2012 4:24 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: District 8 manahattan

DO NOT CHANGE THE BOARDERS OF District 8

While there is enough turmoil I the world,

we do not need to have more added to District 8 in dividing the community by changing the district lines.

If you really knew the people in this community you wouldn't change the line as you have noted.

This community is like a HUMAN BEING IN BODY PARTS.

If you cut off an arm it's not complete; If you cut the legs off it's not complete.

And if you cut the head off it doesn't exist.

Please do not KILL THIS DISTRICT> Keep it together so it can continue to flourish.

Thank You,
Celia Ramirez

Hearings

From: Celia Ramirez <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 1:31 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Districting for District 8 manhattan

TO ALL THAT SIT ON THE COMMISSION ;

I support the fight for not moving the district line and losing pieces of our soul here in East Harlem; El Barrio.

After the battles of survival for over two decades and poverty all around in this District 8 this change would be literally , STEALING FROM THE PEOPLE THEIR SWEAT EQUITY AND HARD WORK THAT THEY HAVE DONE TO MOVE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Now that it would flourish and the people would be able to be proud and enjoy the fruits of their labor you come like a thief in the night and try to take it away .

I for one, am appalled that human beings like yourselves haven't put yourselves in the shoes of (District 8) these people and think how would you feel if they came to where you live and decide to put other powers in charge that don't even know you.

This community needs to be able to stay as a community and not be torn apart .

After so long now that it is growing and it's developing and expanding the dead areas and producing you feel that it should change.

NO NO NO NO , LEAVE IT ALONE... TOGETHER. NO CHANGES

Celia Ramirez ,V.P.
East River North Renewal, HDFC.Inc
430 East 118th Street Suite#1E
441 East 117th Street
New York, New York 10035
212 427-8716

Committee on Districting
New York City
District 8 Spanish Harlem

October 4, 2012

Dear Committee members & Council Leaders:

Thank you for granting me this time to speak concerning the Proposed Redistricting of District 8.

My grandfather Mr. Lopez immigrated here to Spanish Harlem in 1940 from Spain because of a Fascist Regime under Franco.

His first employment was working in La Marqueta selling agricultural foods then shortly thereafter entered WWII in the Navy got killed by a German Torpedo striking his ship.

Then my grandmother started working in La Marqueta selling fruits for the next 15 years.

I have known La Marqueta all of my life and Spanish Harlem as a cultural Mecca for the Puerto Rican & Cuban residents. The new wave of immigrants Mexicans thriving under this wonderful melting pot would be deprived of this neighborhoods rich heritage if Sections of Spanish Harlem cross-over to District 9.

Please do not allow the very few cultural landmarks Spanish Harlem residents have left to call their own just because of what looks like backroom political deals.

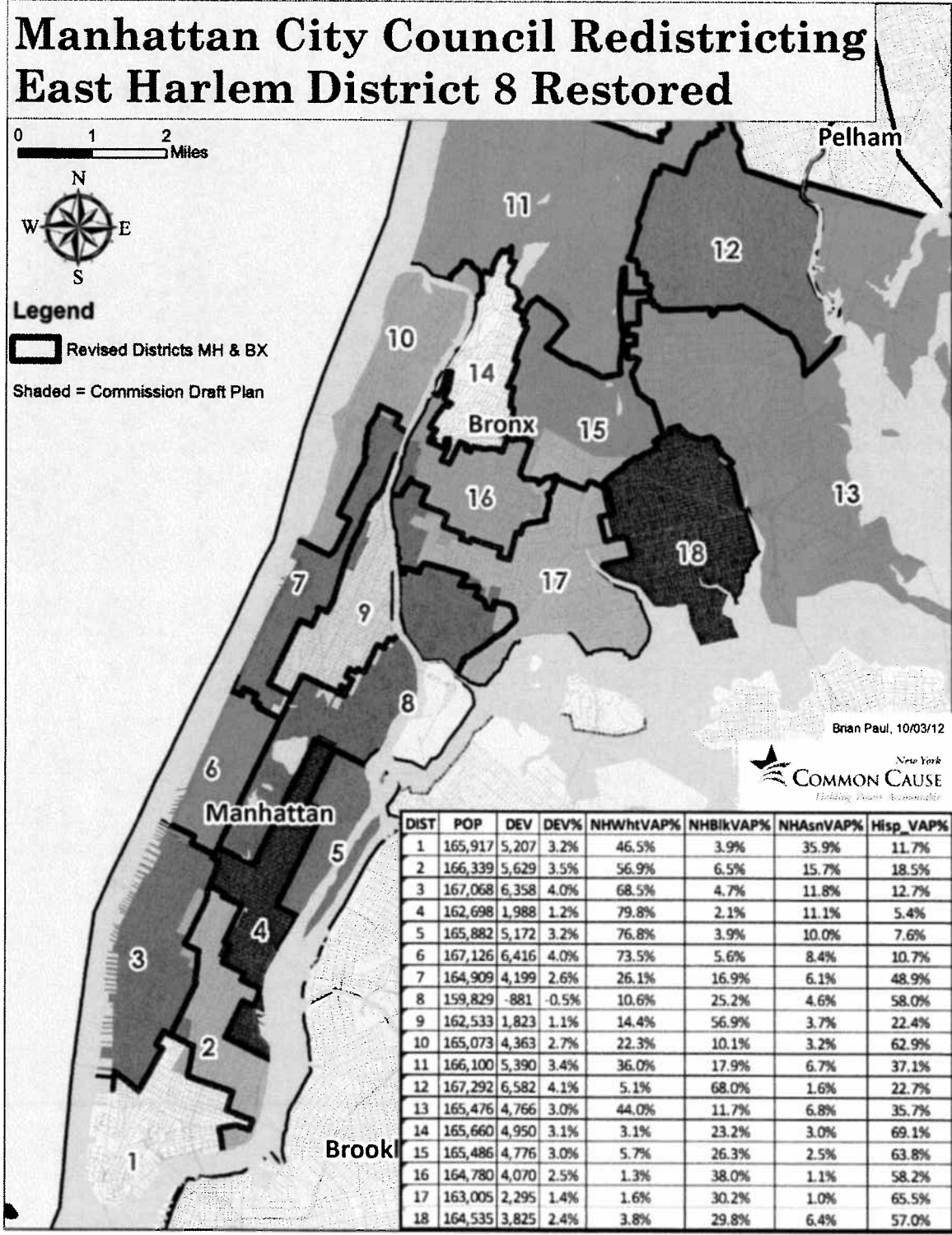
I am a leader at the organization Community Voices Heard (CVH), a community organizing group based at 106th St and Lexington Avenue. CVH asked Common Cause, a non-partisan watchdog group and expert on redistricting issues, if it was possible to draw that maps so we could keep East Harlem together, and keep District 8 based in Manhattan.

Common Cause found that it is doable. By making a few slight changes, Common Cause found that District 8 would have a population of 102,709 in Manhattan and a population of 57,120 in the Bronx

Common Cause reported to us:

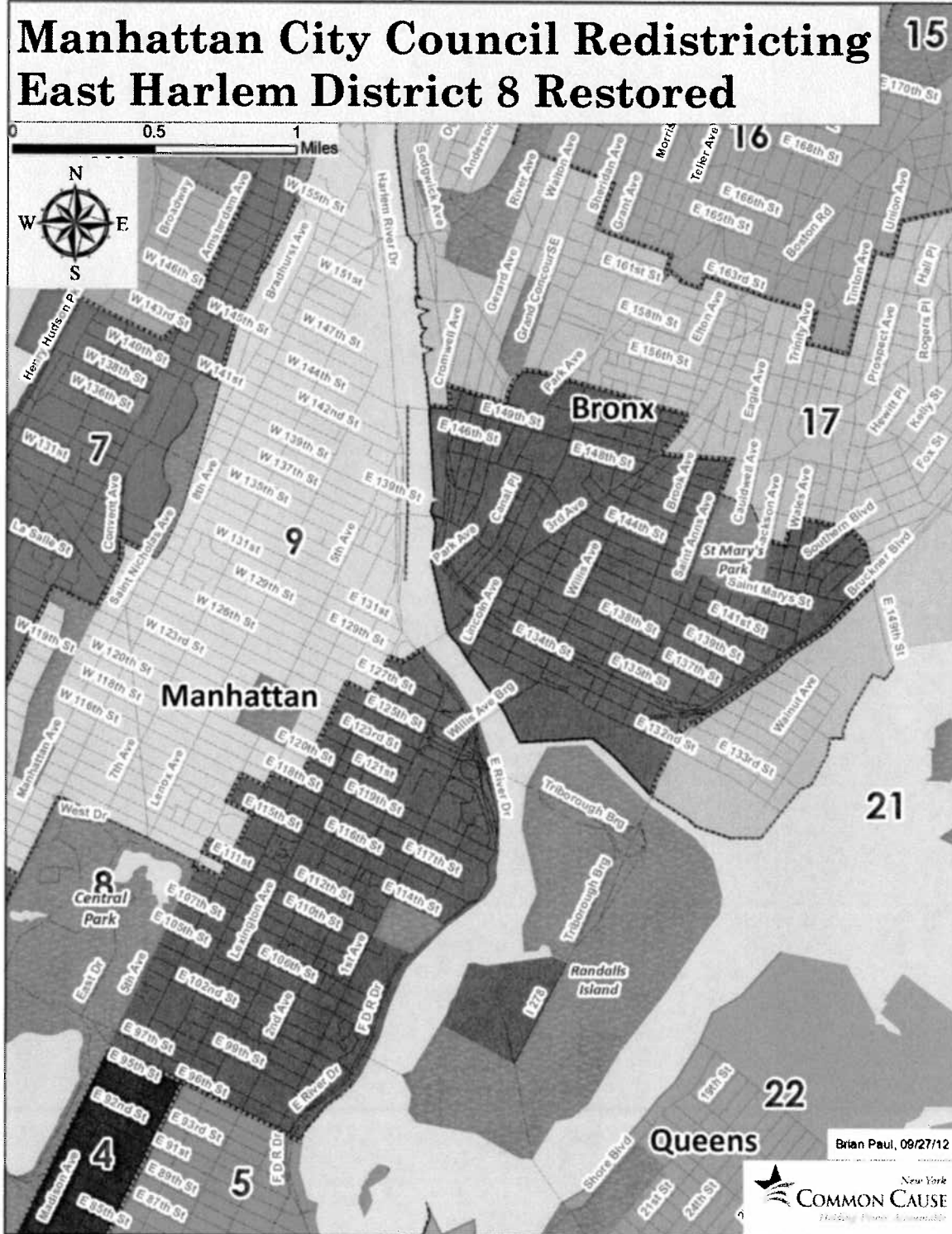
ATTACHMENT 1

Common Cause’s “least change while protecting the East Harlem community of interest” proposal, prepared at the request of Community Voices Heard. (Sept 2012)



ATTACHMENT 2

A close-up of Common Cause's "least change while protecting the East Harlem Community of interest" proposal, prepared at the request of Community Voices Heard. (Sept 2012)



City Redistricting Hearing Testimony

October 4, 2012

Daniel Marks Cohen

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

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██

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.

Testimony of Deborah Quinones
Before the NYC Districting Commission
Oct. 4, 2012
Aurturo Schomburg Library

Good evening my name is Deborah Quinones a life long resident of El Barrio East Harlem. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the City Council redistricting. My testimony this evening comes from a place of deep and profound love and respect for my community and I apologize in advance should I become emotional. As a long time community leader, activist, founding board member of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Board member, former member of Civitas and member of Community Board #11 where I have served as Vice Chair and Chair of the Youth, Health, Cultural Committees and Carnivals Task I understand the difficulties and pressures of engaging in a planning effort that impact peoples' lives. I know that on many occasions the process, intent, and responsibility to engaging the community and maintaining transparency are difficult. So with that I want to thank the all the members of the NYC Districting Commission for all of their hard work.

I must address the issue of redistricting itself and the process of discussion with the incumbents to seek their input and approvals that keep them from really talking to the community about the issue and how they can better serve the community. I find that this discussion that started a year ago was glossed over by the elected officials assuming that from the lack of community involvement in the past that they will just do what they do and get what they want. I went to a meeting last year about redistricting and only 8 people showed up there was no follow up to reach out and ensure more participation. It seemed as if there was there just a check mark placed next to the box of community out reach and they moved on. Why wasn't there a media campaign with PSAs to educated the community?

I am very concerned that Electeds and District leaders did not follow up but instead arrogantly assumed that they were untouchable. Guess what we are all touched by the loss of the Marqueta and Randall's Island. There are clear violations of the city charter with the placement of Randall Island into Queens. The Charter states that a district should cross in another borough unless is absolutely necessary. What is so necessary about that when for years on the community board we have worked with Randall's island to ensure EH access As a members of the community board we have had so many discussion and issues with Randal's island the about EH access and participation in the programs.

My deep concern for the Marqueta as a cultural; and spiritual; sanctuary that is now being tossed as a political football for years.but it is ours. We have not had the support form the city to save it. Instead hap hazard efforts to dress it up, to paint it and to up screw it up. Every plan has been lost and then when the East Harlem Business Capital Corporation was close it was taken away. Give us back Randal's island as a community vehicle to address our lack physical fitness to address our issues of obesity and chronic conditions.

Give us the Marqueta as a solid revenue generating vehicle for fresh fruits and crafts to support our fragile tourism infrastructure.District 8 is being squeezed and we deserve better. So what do I recommend? A serious review of the current proposed lines. Go south not west and keep la Maaqutea and Randal's island and shift districts in the Bx. East Harlem is not silly paddy to be stretched to the point where we do not get adequate representation and are not afforded the same quality of life as other communities. This plan kills us at a spiritual, social, economic and physical level. We will not be a bedroom community that suffers from the lack of vehicles to generate revenue where we are unable to keep the money in the community. We are more that just projects, we are more than just train tracks, we are more than just the space between 103r and 125th and we need a district that reflect that. So now my planning hat comes on and I hear what about the numbers what about the number gives us our fair share of the legal limit. I find it so unusual that the distinct will be in pushed into the Bronx as a result of packing the Manhattan

districts at different rates of 4.0% for Man and District 8 at 0.7% Why is that? Don't get me wrong I like the Bronx, but I do not support a Bronx based district that will not fully service the needs of East Harlem. We may be small and easy to assume that there is just one layer that defines the district, but we are so much more. We share more in common with our Southern neighbors that seem to moving up into the community faster and faster. So what do I propose are shifts in Manhattan districts further south and to reworking district on the Bronx

Your concept of least change has the most impact, your concept of association tears us apart, and your interpretation of the voting rights act to protect the district has left us vulnerable

My testimony this evening was humble attempt to address this issue and I thank the commission for their time and ask that more communication occur about the next steps.

Thank You
Deborah Quinones

Testimony of DeNora Getachew to the New York City Districting Commission
Thursday, October 04, 2012
submitted electronically

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to the New York City Districting Commission (Commission) at its Manhattan hearing on Thursday, October 04, 2012. I commend all of the Commission members for taking on such an important task to ensure our democratic system of government best reflects our community's growth and population shifts over the last decade.

I am a resident of the Upper West Side of Manhattan in City Council District 8 ("District 8"), a member of Manhattan Community Board 7 and a member of the Board of Directors of Union Settlement Association in East Harlem. It is through these multiple perspectives that I express my concerns with the proposed redistricting as it relates to District 8. While I believe that the Western portion of District 8 is in need of its own district, the proposal submitted by the Commission only exacerbates the problem by creating new divisions within our community that adversely impacts the haphazard unity that has evolved in the district. Specifically, I live on West 107th Street off of Broadway in a building that would now be carved out of District 8, although my neighbors an avenue away would remain in District 8 or be included in another Council district. Such a change cannot be what is contemplated by New York City Charter Section 52's requirements that districts be compact, contiguous, protect communities of interest, and provide fair and effective representation for communities of the racial and language minority groups which are protected by the Voting Rights Act.

As it relates to the East Harlem portion of District 8, which I have come to understand in my capacity as a Boardmember with Union Settlement Association, I would ask the Commission to respect the importance of keeping the Puerto Rican population in East Harlem in one council district. District 8 as currently constituted empowers a strong Latino population, which constitutes a community of interest. Carving this portion of District 8 into multiple pieces dilutes a community, which is inconsistent with the City Charter's mandate. Of particular note is the proposal to take La Marqueta and other important historic and cultural landmarks for the Puerto Rican community that currently reside in District 8 and place them in another Council district. This neighborhood and the important institutions that it houses should all be preserved intact.

In the absence of an actual West Side district, I would ask that the Commission keep District 8 as it is on the West Side. Making the West Side above 96th Street an ancillary part of two districts is not in anyone's best interest. Under the Unity Map proposal, which preserves much of the district as is, 90% of Manhattan Valley would be in a single Council district. Such an approach is consistent with the Unity Coalition map, which was developed by Latino Justice PRLDEF, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College. This map more accurately reflects the boundaries of the Manhattan Valley community of interest, and preserves representation of communities of color citywide. While my street is not currently included in the Unity Map that does not mean that it could not be included in a revised draft or that its approach is not sound policy.

In conclusion, I ask that the Commission strongly consider the concerns raised by myself, other residents of District 8 and policy experts on this issue as it makes a final recommendation regarding proposed district lines affecting District 8. I would also encourage the Commission to go above the City Charter's requirements and engage in another round of public comment on the proposed lines before finalizing them.

Hearings

From: D Collier [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2012 10:02 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Redistricting 8 and 9th council areas

NYC Districting Commission
Attn: Jonathan Etricks
253 Broadway, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Mr. Jonathan Etricks:

Unfortunately, I have an engagement this evening I would like to add my voice to meeting and support the redistricting proposals that include the following:

1. The district boundaries of the 9th Council district be Amsterdam and Morningside Avenues to the west, 110 street to the south, 155street and Polo Grounds and Rangel Houses to the North and Lexington and Park Avenue to the East with 115th street being the turning onto Madison avenue continuing to 110th street..
2. La Marqueta (historic cultural Latino legacy)which would be split in the Commission's first proposal would then be restored to District 8.
3. Randall's Island be restored to District 8. District 8 "green spaces" availability would be severely limited by Randall's move to Astoria district - further limiting our East Harlem/Harlem children access to upward mobility athletics and recreation.
4. While it is understood why District 8 was extended into Bronx, such far extension could be challenging for whoever holds that seat - having to balance issues/attention from Bronx/Manhattan. Consideration should be given to Bronx lines being drawn closer to Mott Haven and South East Bronx..

Thank you for taking into consideration my concerns.

Diane Collier
Community Advocate

Hearings

From: eastrivernorthrenewa [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2012 3:16 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: El Barrio La Maarqueta

Redistricting La Marrqueta:

NY State just like Texas and other southern states must conform to the Civil Rights Legislation of 1964 because of their past discriminatory practices.

If redistricting La Marqueta violates the rights of the Puerto Rican-Hispanic speaking population, or of El Barrio - based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin this Act (Federal Government), just like in Texas, will prohibit the redistricting of La Marqueta in such a manner.

Please understand: El Barrio-Spanish Harlem has few icons, the oldest and most venerable being La Marketa (East 116th Street). For 4 years on summer Saturdays, East River North Renewal Inc., headed by Albert Medina and Celia Ramirez, bring latin music lovers from all corners of the City, Connecticut, New Jersey and Puerto Rico come to La Marketa's Placita hear and dance to salsa oldies and the latest hits from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. We have been working with our dear Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito to integrate this effort into the economic development plan for the Metro North viaduct. We urge your support to insure that La Marketa remains in the 8th District, along with El Museo del Barrio, Julia de Burgos Boulevard (106th 5th to FDR Drive).

Hearings

From: eastrivernorthrenewa [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2012 3:43 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: El Barrio La Marqueta

Redistricting La Marrqueta:

NY State just like Texas and other southern states must conform to the Civil Rights Legislation of 1964 because of their past discriminatory practices.

If redistricting La Marqueta violates the rights of the Puerto Rican-Hispanic speaking population, or of El Barrio - based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin this Act (Federal Government), just like in Texas, will prohibit the redistricting of La Marqueta in such a manner.

Please understand: El Barrio-Spanish Harlem has few icons, the oldest and most venerable being La Marketa (East 116th Street). For 4 years on summer Saturdays, East River North Renewal Inc., headed by Albert Medina and Celia Ramirez, bring latin music lovers from all corners of the City, Connecticut, New Jersey and Puerto Rico come to La Marketa's Placita hear and dance to salsa oldies and the latest hits from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. We have been working with our dear Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito to integrate this effort into the economic development plan for the Metro North viaduct. We urge your support to insure that La Marketa remains in the 8th District, along with El Museo del Barrio, Julia de Burgos Boulevard (106th 5th to FDR Drive).

Hearings

From: eastrivernorthrenewa [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2012 3:52 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: El Barrio La Marqueta

Redistricting La Marrqueta:

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Hearings

From: eastrivernorthrenew [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2012 3:56 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Sense of Belonging

La Marqueta *A Sense of Belonging*

Post World War II East Harlem:

New York City, the first home for millions of immigrants would eventually become the new home for a massive influx of *U.S. citizens - - Puerto Ricans from the West Indies*, in the late 1940s. Following World War II, however, migration resumed at an even greater scale, the Puerto Rican community would more than quadruple by 1950.

With the arrival of these newcomers, stores and markets arose and changed to meet their needs. As early as the 1930s, East 116th Street was crowded with stores with restaurants and music shops reflecting *the thriving Puerto Rican culture*.

A pushcart market under the Park Avenue viaduct between 111th and 116th Streets goes back to the twenties. In the thirties, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia enclosed and equipped it with sheds. It has since evolved into *La Marqueta*.

Located in the heart of El Barrio-East Harlem, *La Marqueta* stood out as an important symbol of Puerto Rican-Hispanic culture. It was both an active and exciting place, where goods and services were sold, and it was also a place where to meet and learn about each other; and it also communicated the habits, beliefs, and values of culture from one generation to another, and as such, to provide for its continuity.

Those remembrances are not just merely knowledge of actual events or circumstances, but are a state of mind, a feeling, a sense of belonging; of how to employ oneself – rationally – in dealing with given situations. What's more, should we observe some qualities worthy of esteem in our individual lives, in anyway whatsoever, we should, at such time, regard highly and feel some sort of moral tie, with those forces that helped shape them; such as those close relationships that bind us – by ties of birth and affection – by the language and culture through which we express ourselves, and by the collective memories reconstructed from the past which nourished them.

As we go forward in our examination of the link between events that are preserved in remembered time, and a system of beliefs leading to the present and to the future, it will call up general concepts of power through which man achieves his ends; it enfolds the possibility of an improved conception of ourselves – in the present, by understanding the elements of power, options, and state of affairs that lead us to the set of circumstances in which we find ourselves today.

Albert Medina
East River North Renewal, Inc.

During the early years of the 20th Century, they were necessarily preoccupied with the legal and moral obligations of family life. However, they still took time out to function as an actuating influence in the struggle of others, and thus help overcome the trials and tribulations of daily living. They joined civic or religious organizations and became active in the affairs of the community; however their concerns were not limited to political life, but also with those issues that are reflective of family values and the social order.

These persons, builders of societies, played decisive role in defining important issues, and in influencing individual opinion regarding those issues; Some were not necessarily well known or celebrated individuals in life, but they were likely to be the persons to whom others in the local neighborhood -El Barrio-looked to for guidance on certain subjects.

Those individuals were generally unknown outside their own circle of friends and acquaintances, but their cumulative influence in the formation of public opinion was substantial. For those reasons we wish to pay tribute to -The Founders of El Barrio- by designating the historic site of “La Marqueta” E. 116th Street and Park Avenue, a commemorative landmark – in honor of those friends of humanity.

Albert Medina
East River North Renewal, Inc.

Hearings

From: eastrivernorthrenewa [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 01, 2012 4:01 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Founders of El Barrio

The Founding of El Barrio The People

The values and material objects that make up a shared way of life: the intangible creations of human society; and the products which emerged out of the interactions of people – within the limitations of the then geographic boundaries that encompassed El Barrio, NY - is not something to be glossed over lightly.

Their lives were not destined to be separate chapters in the stream of time, but rather, events that would bring together the fate and responsibilities of generations of the past with those now living, and with those who grew up with the emergence of the intrinsic values - of its founders- as a measure of their growth.

Ones life style is not determined by instinct or as an innate gift at birth! Human nature being what it is – diverse- attests to the influence of culture on personality and on everyday life experiences.

Nevertheless, the lives of those first individuals, Puerto Ricans, newcomers to NYC society (from the beginning of the 20th Century and in greater numbers in the late 1940s), was dominated by struggles against the adversities of discriminatory policies, and economic deprivations. Quite often, earnest efforts on their part, to change and improve living standards were over laden with difficulties, they were not acknowledged with appreciation nor regarded with esteem by the many, and effectively resisted.

Hearings

From: eastrivernorthrenewa [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 02, 2012 9:56 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: el Barrio

“History is a product of Change, powered by the inevitable struggle for control; the characteristic attitudes of man, and his capacity to share in the feelings of others, will determine the course of events.”

El Barrio The Altar of Sacrifices and Obligations

With utmost certainty, the deeds of our predecessors will always occupy a position of honor in our remembrance, to do otherwise we would deny our coming generations that in which they could take pride; this is rightly so, especially when such men stood at the forefront of Human Progress, who strove to rout the powers of evil in bloody combat and mend the unjust suffering of the innocent; and like the Founding Fathers of El Barrio, fought and overcame the adversities of their day.

During the closing years of the 19th century the writings of Betances and Schomburg, Puerto Rican Nationalists, dominated the thinking men of Puerto Roco and the Spanish speaking people of the Americas. In a similar manner, the entrance of American Troops onto Puerto Rican soil marked a new era for its people.

Compelled by circumstances, Puerto Ricans left the security of their native soil in search of improved living conditions. The businessman and the wage earner, men of every kind of professional and social position joined in this great movement of people; the seeming cure-all was found , then people bounded together and confided in each other their yearnings; to dedicate the place of rights and privileges with blood, an offering on the altar of sacrifices, and obligations – wherein man could progress with hope -the Temple floor was blood stained at the Eastern gate.

**Albert Medina
East River North Renewal, Inc.**

**Testimony of Elisa Maria Cose
Student at PS 163
NYC Districting Commission Hearing
Schomburg Center
October 4, 2012**

Hello, my name is Elisa Cose. I am almost 10 years old and a fifth grade student at PS 163 on West 97th Street.

I am here to testify in support of Councilwoman Melissa Mark Viverito. I want the Commission to think about how it will affect our school if her district is moved from our community.

Councilwoman Melissa fights for New York City public schools. She helped a lot with our after-school program called LEAP. LEAP helps many parents who work late. LEAP is funded by grants, the PTA and by funding from our Councilwoman Melissa. This past year LEAP lost a Ten Thousand dollar grant. Because of that, LEAP had to cut back. The program started much later in the school year. That was very hard for everyone who depends on LEAP, particularly for working parents who need an affordable and safe after school program.

If we lose Melissa as the city council member for our school we lose somebody who we know puts students first. We have no idea whether the next council member will be that dedicated or even care about me and the other students at my school.

Melissa also helps to fund supplies for my school. She understands that we need things like computers if we are to do our best.

Nobody can guarantee that school budgets won't be cut. But Councilwoman Melissa has greatly reduced the harm that would have come to our school because of budget cuts. She is a great leader who wants children to thrive. She cares about our future.

She also cares a lot about public safety. She is the one who got us Fatima, our school crossing guard who greets us every day as we go to school.

97th Street and Columbus Avenue is a very dangerous intersection. When our parents asked for a crossing guard at that intersection they were told NO! Melissa fought hard and finally got a Yes. Because of her, we are a much safer community.

Neighborhoods are supposed to be kept together. The Commission's proposed plan breaks up Councilwoman Melissa's district in a way that is harmful to our community.

I hope you will all consider what I have said and keep her as our City Council representative.

Thank You

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: Eve <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 5:30 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Districts 8 & 16 re-districting, my opinion

October 10, 2012

To the re-districting commission:

I am a proud 28 year resident of East Harlem and also have the blessing of working in my community. Right now, I am not very pleased with the machinations of the commission.

On Tuesday, October 2nd, I attended the re-districting hearing in the Bronx and witnessed the great displeasure of many of District 16's residents as the commission has chosen to move a block of the constituents into District 8. Moreover, not only are the Bronx residents unhappy, scores of District 8's are as well. I implore you to reconsider this decision.

Your proposal to "change the borders" *appears* inequitable and disjointed. It does not make sense. Why change something that "ain't broken"? District 8 and 16's elected officials have worked hard to find solutions to the myriad of issues that are unique to their respective constituency. They have worked hard on planning the economic development of the areas they cover and have worked hard to establish partnerships with the many organizations/businesses that service the communities they represent in order to bring goods and services to its residents. The council members have consistently and passionately advocated on behalf of: the poor, the sick, the elderly, its youth, its workers, and the disenfranchised -representing ALL residents, of ALL walks in life, of ALL income levels.

Since 2001, District 16 has been aptly represented by Ms. Foster, one of two African American council members in the Bronx. Concourse Village, a predominantly African American housing complex of working people (a very heavy voting block) does not want to be represented by District 8. Concourse Village wants to be represented by the Council Member they voted for, an African American. They have lived in harmony with their fellow Morrisania neighbors for many years – why are you splitting the community up?

District 8 characterizes a mini New York City - inhabited by many ethnicities that also harmoniously live together in Manhattan Valley, Mott Haven and El Barrio. Why has the commission decided to separate such a happy family? We understand and agree that growing districts should be fairly represented but why make the residents wear a size 9-1/2 shoe when the 10 is perfectly comfortable? AND, oh my goodness – to move La Marqueta, an icon of this community out! Now, that is TRULY insulting. Has the commission read any of El Barrio's history?

La Marqueta needs to remain in District 8. Manhattan Valley (they LOVE their council member) needs to remain in District 8. Randall's Island (our council member fought hard to make it accessible to our youth not just the private schools of the city) should remain in District 8. For goodness sake, hasn't the commission noticed that Mott Havenites and Manhattanites – can easily walk to the Island and you plan on "sending" it to Queens!

The process, this time around, is not working. Too many people are very unhappy and unhappy residents make angry voters! I implore you to reconsider the mapping. I implore you to take a look at the Unity Map – which is a great compromise.

Keep our families together – don't break us up, let's us ALL be happy. The UNITY Map will keep us unified.

Sincerely,

Eve Valenzuela, East Harlem resident

Redistricting Commission Statement

Dear Committee Members:

Hello My name is Harry Rodriguez the Senior District Leader of the 68th Assembly District Part B. I am here today to voice my outrage regarding the proposed redrawing of the 8th Councilmatic and the attempt to place the Marqueta in the 9th Councilmatic district. This is an affront to the people in East Harlem and in particular the Puertorican residents of my district. The Marqueta has the tremendous potential of creating job opportunities to the residents of El Barrio when future projects take hold. Why will someone or a committee take away a parcel of land where no one resides and count it has people living there. I am requesting that committee reconsider the map changes and place the Marqueta in the 8th Councilmatic. In addition, I strongly suggest that the the 8th councilmatic district include all the of the present 68th Assembly District and proceed to go north up to the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. I hope and pray that the commission understands how important it is keeping the Marqueta in El Barrio is to the residents of El Barrio. I am looking forward to your response and hope you the commission can agree with the residents Of East Harlem. How would you feel if you reside in West Harlem and they propose to take the Apollo and redrawned and place in the 10th or 8th Councilmantic District. The community will be in an uproar. Well that's how the residents of East Harlem feel about the Marqueta. So please reconsidered and take to account the concerns our residents of El Barrio/East Harlem .

Thanks for allowing me to voice my opinion,

Respectfully submitted

Harry Rodriguez

Democratic District Leader

68th Assembly District Part B

October 4, 2012

To: Districting Commission

Re: CD #8

Good evening, Chairperson Romano and Commission members, my name is Henry Calderon and I am the Chairperson of the East Harlem Chamber of Commerce. I am also the owner of a small business located in East Harlem. I was born and raised in East Harlem and I have worked here all of my life. I was a member of the previous districting commission during 2002-2003 and I had the privilege of serving as the Chairperson of that commission. I appreciate the difficult you have before you. You need to implement a simple but crucial concept, One Person – One Vote. You need to insure that minority groups are fairly represented. There are many council districts in the city in which minority groups constitute a numerical majority. This is where one looks for Communities of Interest in order to have equitable district lines. What are the criteria for a Community of Interest? Language is one, Culture is another and Geography is important as well. Another one is having the same landlord. People who have the same landlord can certainly have shared experiences especially when the landlord is the City of NY. The NYCHA has more apartments in East Harlem than in any other part of the city and having district lines that meander through our housing projects creating artificial boundaries, only adds to the many problems which already exist in our housing projects.

The people of the South Bronx and East Harlem share a similar history. The majority of the residents speak the same language and listen to the same music. Many shopped at El Barrio's La Marqueta and had picnics in the South Bronx's St. Mary's Park. We share more than just the # 6 train. We share heart and soul.

It is possible that someone who just looks at a map and does not know the people, who live there, could take away La Marqueta from its people. This is why we look to the Commission to correct this error and put La Marqueta back into CD #8. I have enclosed a map which we call East Harlem – South Bronx, A People United.

Thank you.



District	TOTAL ADJ.	Deviation %	Deviation %	HISP ADJ	% HISP ADJ	NHWHITE ADJ	% NHWHITE ADJ	NHBLACK ADJ	% NHBLACK ADJ	NHASIAN ADJ	% NHASIAN ADJ
8	164,457	4,160	2.60%	101,418	61.23%	13,334	8.05%	6,393	3.86%	41,772	25.22%

LATINOJUSTICE ■ **PRLDEF**

— EAST HARLEM - SOUTH BRONX MAP —

**Testimony of Isaac Gluck
NYC Districting Commission Hearing
Schomburg Center
October 4, 2012**

Good Evening. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in this public hearing. I am here to testify on behalf of Melissa Mark-Viverito and why we should not re-district.

My name is Isaac Gluck. I am 9 years old and I am a fifth grade student at PS 163, The Alfred E. Smith School. I play soccer and baseball as well as violin. I am interested in playing professional sports or possibly being a doctor like my dad.

I have three reasons why Melissa Mark-Viverito should stay as our district councilwoman.

The first reason is:

In 2010, the construction workers were building stores and markets in the area we call Columbus Square, from 97th to 99th street on Columbus and Amsterdam. PS 163 is right next door.

There is a busy intersection with cars jammed up which was an even bigger problem with the construction.

School parents spoke up and asked the NYPD for a crossing guard. The NYPD answered no. We spoke about it with Mellissa Mark-Viverito and she agreed.

She then asked the NYPD for a crossing guard just like we did. The first time they said no and said it was because no one had been hit by a car or truck.

Melissa fought hard and one day they put a crossing guard at the intersection. That day was a big change for the school because it made us all a slightly bit safer from getting hit by a car or truck.

The second reason is:

Ms. Viverito helped fund LEAP. LEAP is an after school program that allows kids whose parents cannot pick them up to stay in a safe environment where they have activities which keeps kids happy and excited. They also give time for the kids to do their homework.

Melissa fought hard to get money for this program. This helped kids in different ways including the cost of babysitters.

I think when she raised money for this leap program she took a step forward of being a good community and helping are school kids.

The third reason is;

Melissa Mark –Viverito helped fund money so that we could get our computers. School parents needed money so they could get computers for the school. The computers cost a lot of money .

Our school did not have as much money as we needed so we asked Melissa Mark –Viverito. She asked the government for more money. Melissa finally convinced them and now we have our computers.

We use are computers so that the kids can learn how to type and search interesting facts.

Thanks to Melissa Mark-Viverito we have helpful items and helpful people.

Thank you again and have a nice day.

Hearings

From: Johnny Cecilio Rivera [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 4:01 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Redistricting of the East Harlem Community
Attachments: Remarks to the NYC Districting Commission by JCR.docx

**Remarks to the NYC Districting Commission Public Hearing
October 10, 2012
Mr. Johnny Rivera, Life Long Resident of East Harlem/ El Barrio**

Greetings members of the New York City Districting Commission, I want to ask that the Commission strongly consider maintaining the current line of the 8th Council District in order to preserve the community. Keeping this boundary intact will keep organizations and residents of common interest together while slightly expanding into the South Bronx and reaching the targeted number of roughly 160,000 for the entire district.

I am requesting that the commissioners keep District 8 a majority Manhattan district even though it expands into the South Bronx area. The current District 8 borders provide a good representation of East Harlem as a "community of interest." Families identify East Harlem as the area east of 5th Avenue towards the East River, from south 96th Street up to around 143rd Street. Families and community-based organizations identify this area as East Harlem, and these are the people who have worked over the years to make this place a better home.

Randall's Island also has been part of the CB#11, part of Manhattan, and closely associated with East Harlem. At Harlem RBI, we send our kids there to play baseball and softball.

Your proposal would divide this community, a community that has labored over many quality-of-life issues regarding housing, health care and education. Your proposal would dilute the political power of East Harlem residents as the Bronx would have an enormous say and potentially overriding East Harlem's residents, undermining our political self-determination.

For these reasons, I support the Unity Plan as a framework and urge the commissioners to support this plan as well.

Johnny Rivera

Hearings

From: Julian Gerena-Quinones [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2012 10:57 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Re-Districting of El Barrio/East Harlem

To: Districting Commission

Dear Carl Hum, Chair

The East Harlem/El Barrio community will not accept anything less than the full restoration of our current District 8 boundaries, from 96th Street all the way to the Harlem River Drive. All the blocks cut out along 5th, Madison and Park need to be put back in our district. We are a community of interest and demand that you stop dividing us

--
Julián Gerena-Quiñones
Barrio Media
(646) [REDACTED]
www.barriomedia.com

www.youtube.com/barriomedia
www.facebook.com/barriomedia
www.twitter.com/barriomedia

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Hearings

From: Kathleen Benson Haskins <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 7:39 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Please rethink the proposed new District 8

Dear Districting Commission:

I live in District 9 but worked in East Harlem for 43 years and remain committed to the community—serving on the boards of two nonprofit organizations and also on an ad hoc committee. I was appalled to see the proposed new District 8, which chops off 20 blocks of East Harlem plus Randalls Island, splits the fabled La Marqueta in two, and reduces the Manhattan portion of the district to 49%.

The current District 8 is hardly un-gerrymandered, and I can just imagine the hue and cry that greeted it when proposed and instituted: East Harlem, Manhattan Valley, Morrissania, Central Park, Randalls Island—what kind of district is that? But the council members who I remember representing District 8 in its current form—Phil Reed and Melissa Mark-Viverito—made that hodgepodge of a district work. At least the current District 8 is a majority Manhattan district. I cannot imagine the same positive outcome were the proposed new boundaries for District 8 adopted.

The proposed new district decimates East Harlem as a neighborhood and as a political entity, and it cannot be allowed to stand. Per the lion's share of testimony at the Bronx hearing on October 2, the proposed new district lines also do great damage to District 16, removing Concourse Village, which the speakers regard as a significant stabilizing force in that community.

I am aware of the domino effect of changing the proposed district lines. All those neat population totals seem to be the driving force behind the proposed changes, and once you start shifting borders those approximately equal totals disappear. But redistricting is more than a numbers game. It must take into account the recognized neighborhoods. Since the Unity Map is so well thought out and so sensitive to communities as well as to population totals, I urge you to start with that and do whatever tweaking is necessary to address the concerns with that map that were voiced at the two hearings I attended in the Bronx and Manhattan.


Sincerely,

Kathleen B. Haskins

I've lived in East Harlem for 7 years and am among the very few non-Mexican residents of my building on east 116th Street. My neighbors have welcomed me and become my friends. I feel happier and more included here than in any of the other Manhattan neighborhoods I've called home over the past 25 years, although I remain an outsider by virtue of my privilege as a white native, and my slow pace in learning Spanish. In any case, I have become invested in causes affecting this community, such as immigrants' rights, and have allied myself in a shared humanity with my neighbors. As a member of the LGBT community, I am predisposed to recognize the commonality of every human/civil rights movement. The battle for inclusion, recognition, and an equal place at society's table crosses ethnic boundaries. My time in East Harlem has intensified this awareness and opened my eyes to the unique characteristics of an over-arching Hispanic culture, the bonds and fissures existing between distinct Hispanic communities and the overall challenges of struggling, marginalized people. It is clear to me that this community requires a strong, representative voice capable of uniting the community in causes foundational to basic human rights, as well as offering support to those concerns that are unique to the disparate Hispanic cultures. The district lines should be drawn to ensure a consolidation of Hispanic constituents empowered in solidarity, and with a higher potential of Hispanic representation.

And it goes without saying that La Marqueta belongs in El Barrio.

Les LaRue


New York, NY 10029

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.

My name is Madelyn Innocent and I've lived in Douglass Houses since 1957. I am aware that this meeting is about re-districting, District 8 and that means we will be losing a great human being and great Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito who I got to know what she stands for and what she will fight for as well. I met Melissa Mark Viverito on Broadway when she was campaigning for Council Member and she seemed to be very interested in helping the neighborhood as well as being sincere about improving the condition of Public Housing. That was the first Politian to engage me in conversation for public housing and that impressed me very much. I mention these things because when my mother told me stories before we moved into public housing how local Politian's helped my family to move in them and other families as well. Council Member Viverito has restored my faith in Politian's, because of her time and dedication in the improvement of Public Housing.

Melissa is a person who inspires people to do better in their lives. Melissa has the most public housing in her district and gets the challenges and issues public housing residents are facing. For the last two years I have been working with Melissa and her staff with Participatory Budget in District 8, and I've seen her engage with the residents of Douglass Houses where as there has not been anyone putting in the time and effort as well as money to ensure Public Housing will be saved. This reminds of the old days and the stories my mother told me as a child and young adult. Losing her will be devastating to the residents; because we will be losing the one person that I feel who had taken the time to help us in our problems and believe me there are huge problems with NYCHA.

I get it about re-districting, but this is the first time in my life that someone cares about public housing and put in the time and effort into making us proud of where we live as well as standing up for our rights. Also, redistricting will break up our communities of interest. I have never stood up for myself in many instances, but with watching and working with Melissa Viverito and her staff has given me a renewed confidence in myself to work hard for the betterment of the neighborhood. And that was due to Melissa and Community Voices Heard in which I am a member and leader, but now you want her to just abandon us and leave us to fend for ourselves. Isn't this always the way. When you start to get up there someone is always trying to keep you down.

Lastly in my life I've experience good and bad. The good is that Melissa Mark Viverito is an asset to our community that empowers us to speak up and get involved with things you may not otherwise get involved with. The bad is that we have to start over and go backward in time to someone who doesn't know us at all.

Madelyn Innocent

[REDACTED]
New York, NY [REDACTED]

Hearings

From: Marion Cunningham [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 9:26 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Keep District 8 Intact

Please keep District 8 as it is, intact. I live on the west side and think that the diversity of the district is beneficial. East Harlem/El Barrio and La Marqueta to our district. Do not separate us!

Thank you,

Marion Phyllis Cunningham

[REDACTED]
New York, New York 10025

Hearings

From: Maritza Villegas [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 9:24 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: District 8

Honorable Comission Members:

For the past 25 years I have worked in the East Harlem community, known to us as El Barrio, with much success. One of its High Schools Manhattan Center for Science and Math sits on 116th street and FDR Drive and has capitalized on the incredible amount of services the community has to offer. We have taken advantage of the internships at the hospitals and museums, the college prep services of many of the community based organizations, the medical and mental health services, and the rich cultural enrichment classes, workshops and celebrations honoring all its members of the community. Extending this community would water down the services as they stand and make the programs ineffective.

To rip apart and extend the District 8 community to the Bronx an entirely different community with a different history is unconscienable. This is a historic neighborhood with a feel unlike any other, you feel at home. I have fond memories of Sunday dinners at my grandparents during the 1950's on Third Avenue and East 109th Street and my 99 cent shoes my grandmother would buy me from La Marqueta.

Reconsider the Unity Map or leaving the District as it now stands. Don't destroy a community that has actively struggled to make itself better!

Respectively submitted,

Maritza Villegas

Hearings

From: Metin Sarci [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 3:50 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Districting Commision Proposal for Council District 8

To the members of the Districting Commission,

In looking at the proposed new district, and the rationale expressed by the Districting Commission, I believe that for a number of reasons redrawing the lines to divide a district largely between two boroughs is disagreeable as well as nonsensical. First, the proposed lines divide up neighborhoods between those that live in Manhattan and those in the Bronx. Second, the proposal disregards the representation of the Latino communities who largely occupy the current district. Finally, the proposal to split the 8th District evenly between the Bronx and Manhattan, means that one borough will get more representation than the other depending on the current council representation and/or any future candidates

I join my community as well as my councilmember in strongly urging the Districting Commission to use the Unity Map proposal as a starting point in re-drawing the 8.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Metin N. Sarci
[REDACTED]

Hearings

From: NG [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 4:15 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Hearings
Subject: Re: Keeping Communities Together

Dear Councilperson Viverito,

As a member of your small upper west side of Broadway area, I am distressed to learn that it is planned that we are reassigned, again. It is impossible to establish relationships, goals, and communications with local government if our representatives are changing often. I feel that we have just begun to get involved with District 8, and will have to start from scratch if we are redistricted.

Our neighborhood has much in common with other District 8 neighborhoods east of Broadway -- large high-rise buildings of aging housing stock, facilities for homeless individuals and families, proximity to parks, large numbers of children and elderly people.

I hope city government will reconsider these plans, and give us another term in District 8 to accomplish the projects we have started. The only bright side of this re-mapping is that my loss will be my son's gain; his neighborhood in the South Bronx is slated to go into District 8 and he is looking forward to it.

Ms. Viverito, please feel free to use this email wherever you feel it would do the most good.

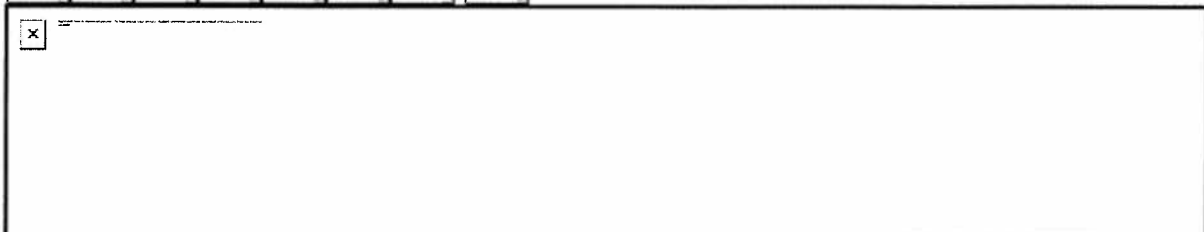
Sincerely yours,
Naomi Gaskin,

[REDACTED]

--- On Wed, 10/10/12, Melissa Mark-Viverito <newsfrommelissa@gmail.com> wrote:

From: Melissa Mark-Viverito [REDACTED]
Subject: Keeping Communities Together
To: [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, October 10, 2012, 3:23 PM

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



Dear Friend:

I have to say, I was truly moved at last week's Districting Commission

Please join us at

Testimony before the NYC Districting Commission Public Hearing

October 4, 2012

Mr. Rich Berlin, Executive Director of Harlem RBI and Chair of the DREAM Charter School

Good evening members of the New York City Districting Commission. My name is Rich Berlin. I am the Executive Director of Harlem RBI and Chair of the DREAM Charter School based in East Harlem. I'm here today to ask that the Commission strongly consider maintaining the current line of the 8th Council District in order to preserve the community. Keeping this boundary intact will keep organizations of common interest together while slightly expanding into the South Bronx and reaching the targeted number of roughly 160,000 for the entire district.

I am requesting that the commissioners keep District 8 a majority Manhattan district even though it expands into the South Bronx area. The current District 8 borders provide a good representation of East Harlem as a "community of interest." Families identify East Harlem as the area east of 5th Avenue towards the East River, from south 96th Street up to around 143rd Street. Families and community-based organizations identify this area as East Harlem, and these are the people who have worked over the years to make this place a better home.

Randall's Island also has been part of the CB#11, part of Manhattan, and closely associated with East Harlem. At Harlem RBI, we send our kids there to play baseball and softball.

Your proposal would divide this community, a community that has labored over many quality-of-life issues regarding housing, health care and education. Your proposal would dilute the political power of East Harlem residents as the Bronx would have an enormous say and potentially overriding East Harlem's residents, undermining their self-determination.

For these reasons, I support the Unity Plan as a framework and urge the commissioners to support this plan as well.

My recommendation to keep District 8 intact is informed by my 15 years of experience in East Harlem, first as a volunteer and then as the head of the Harlem RBI and DREAM Charter School, both of which are nonprofits serving over 1200 young people and their families. Over these years, I have witnessed the community of families and local organizations working together to improve the quality of life. Why would we do anything that would stop them from continuing that work?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony
In opposition to the proposed
8th Council District
NYC Districting Commission
Thursday, October 4th, 2012
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Good Evening. My name is Sandra Morales- De Leon and I am a life-long resident of East Harlem, and also Deputy Director of the East Harlem Business Capital Corporation, whose mission is to significantly enhance the economy and commerce of East Harlem, create jobs and help entrepreneurs and small businesses become successful.

I am here tonight to speak in opposition to the proposed 8th Council District plan whose lines disproportionately traverse two counties – the Bronx and Manhattan – disenfranchises a particular community of interest, and eliminates historical landmarks that are critical to the culture of El Barrio.

Please note the following:

1. The Districting Commission is required under the charter to preserve communities of interest. The part of East Harlem included in District 8 is overwhelmingly Latino and constitutes a community of interest. To move pieces of the neighborhood – like proverbial chess pieces on a Board – to a neighboring Council district that does not share the same cultural identity, is to split up this important community of interest.
2. All residents of the East Harlem community need to be fairly represented on the City Council, keeping as much as possible to the lines that are currently drawn and which currently represent the majority concentration of Latinos and specifically Puerto Ricans.

3. The proposed redistricting would seize 49% of the population of the new district, from another county, the Bronx. This action would completely decimate El Barrio's escalating political power and influence as a community.
4. The blocks being cut from East Harlem and moved to Council District 9 in Central Harlem are 48% Latino. Some of the individual blocks go as high as 55% to 65% Latino. The non partisan good government organization Common Cause has said publicly that "there is no demographic reason" for the way East Harlem is being split up.
5. La Marqueta and other important historic and cultural landmarks for the Puerto Rican community currently reside in Council District 8. In order for these to be fully preserved and to receive proper and warranted attention, they should continue to be represented completely within the East Harlem Council District. Removing La Marqueta from the heart of the Latino community, is akin to placing the historic Apollo Theatre in a district representing Chelsea or Chinatown. The cultural relevance would be diluted. Moreover, La Marqueta is also an economic development engine for our East Harlem community and we need and deserve the jobs and economic opportunities that it will continue to offer.

We are asking that the Districting Commission review our proposed new map - the East Harlem/South Bronx map for District 8 (See attached) – which is sensitive to the need for fair representation, maintains the communities of interest and preserves historical landmarks where they have the most cultural relevance.

Thank you



District	TOTAL_ADJ	Deviation	% Deviation	HISP_ADJ	% HISP_ADJ	NHWHITE_ADJ	% NHWHITE_ADJ	NHBLACK_ADJ	% NHBLACK_ADJ	NHASIAN_ADJ	% NHASIAN_ADJ
8	164,457	4,160	2.60%	101,418	61.23%	13,334	8.05%	6,393	3.86%	41,772	25.22%

LATINOJUSTICE ■ **PRLDEF**

— EAST HARLEM - SOUTH BRONX MAP —

Testimony of Sofia Krulevitch
NYC Districting Commissioning Hearing
Schomburg Center
October 4, 2012

Dear members of the New York City Districting Commission. I am Sofia Krulevitch, a 5th grade student at PS 163. I am here because I want to tell you why it is important for Melissa Marks-Viverito to continue to be our City Council Woman.

It is important for Mts. Marks- Viverito to keep representing PS 163 because she has proven that she cares about our school and its students.

Several years ago parents from PS 163 contacted her about a dangerous intersection near our school. A huge construction project on Columbus and 97 was putting kids and parents in danger. Our parents were told by the Community Board and the Police Department that the intersection did not qualify for a crossing guard. Mrs. Marks-Viverito listened to our worried parents and came to the intersection to see for herself. She agreed that many of my classmates were in danger when they crossed the street to get to school. She fought hard for funding our crossing guard. Thanks to her, many PS 163 students can get to school safely.

I ask you to please keep our school in Councilwoman Marks-Viverito's district. We need her to keep fighting for our school and its students. Thank You.

SUSAN RODRIGUEZ, [REDACTED], NY, NY 10029 M: [REDACTED] H: [REDACTED]
BUSINESS: SISTERHOOD MOBILIZED FOR AIDS/HIV RESEARCH & TREATMENT, 1751 PARK AVENUE, NY, NY 10035

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ABOUT THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING LINES FOR DISTRICT 8. I AM A RESIDENT OF EAST HARLEM FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS AND LIVE ON 106TH STREET BETWEEN 2ND AND 3RD AVENUES. I AM ALSO THE FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF A SMALL NON-PROFIT CALLED SMART WHICH STANDS FOR SISTERHOOD MOBILIZED FOR AIDS/HIV RESEARCH & TREATMENT, ALSO LOCATED CURRENTLY IN DISTRICT 8 ON THE EAST SIDE OF PARK AVENUE BETWEEN 121ST & 122ND STREETS. SMART BEGAN IN EAST HARLEM IN 1998 AND RETURNED TO EAST HARLEM IN JULY 2011.

I AM HERE TODAY BECAUSE I AM DEEPLY DISTURBED AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING LINES THAT HAVE BEEN DRAWN BY THE NYC DISTRICTING COMMISSION THAT ARE SUPPOSEDLY TO BENEFIT THE DISTRICT AND CITY. THIS REDRAWING OF LINES DOES EVERYTHING BUT THAT.

FIRST, LET ME START WITH A QUESTION, MY FIRST QUESTION WHEN I SAW THE PROPOSED DISMANTLING AND DISECTING OF DISTRICT 8: WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS? CERTAINLY NOT THE RESIDENTS, COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES OF EAST HARLEM, A GROWING AND VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD THAT STANDS TO BE DIVIDED UP AND PARCELED OUT INCLUDING LA MARQUETA. SO, WHO STANDS TO PROFIT OR BENEFIT FROM THIS? CERTAINLY NOT COUNCIL WOMAN MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO WHO LOVES THIS COMMUNITY AS SHE DOES ALL OF HER NEIGHBORHOODS THAT SHE HAS REPRESENTED AS A CLEAR AND POWERFUL VOICE AT THE TABLE TO IMPROVE HER DISTRICT. THIS IS VERY APPARENT WHEN SHE WAS ONE OF 4 CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS WHO INITIATED THE PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS LAST YEAR. THROUGH THAT PROCESS OF WHICH I WAS PARTICIPATED AS A BUDGET DELEGATE, I SAW HOW SHE WAS ABLE TO BRING TOGETHER PEOPLE WHO LIVE OR WORK FROM EVERY SINGLE NEIGHBORHOOD SHE REPRESENTS, FROM THE WEST SIDE TO THE EAST SIDE, FROM MOTT HAVEN TO WARD & RANDALLS ISLANDS. WHO ELSE CAN SAY THAT? I WORKED ALONGSIDE MY DISTRICT COLLEAGUES TO PROPOSE PROJECTS TO BE VOTED ON AND

LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS AND NEEDS. I FELT LIKE I WAS PART OF A VERY SPECIAL COMMUNITY, ONE THAT NOW STANDS TO BE DIVIDED UP PIECE BY PIECE TO DIFFERENT DISTRICTS RATHER THAN REMAINING INTACT TO CONTINUE THE DISTRICT PRIDE AND COMRADERIE, A UNIQUE BY-PRODUCT THAT CAME OUT OF THE PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROCESS. I FELT LIKE A TRUE COMMUNITY MEMBER WHICH ALSO CULTIVATED MY SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING. COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS ARE AN ASSET TO COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO ARE DOING THE RIGHT THING AND I AM PROUD AND EXCITED TO BE PART OF DISTRICT 8 TO BE ABLE TO WORK WITH COUNCILWOMAN MELISSA TO MAKE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS BETTER, FROM THE EAST TO THE WEST TO MOTT HAVEN.

SO THE QUESTION REMAINS, WHO PROFITS OR BENEFITS FROM THIS REDRAWING OF LINES? FOR ME, THE ANSWER IS CLEAR: DISTRICT 9 WOULD PROFIT; THE BRONX, WHERE THE REDISTRICTING HAS EXTENDED FAR NORTH INTO AREAS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH MANHATTAN, KNOW NOTHING ABOUT COUNCILWOMAN MELISSA, AN AREA THAT HIGH VOTER TURNOUT THAT WOULD CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO PUT A BRONX DISTRICT LEADER IN PLACE THAT WOULD NOT CARE ONE BIT ABOUT THE SMALL PIECE OF EAST HARLEM THAT IS A LEFTOVER.

AND WHAT ABOUT RANDALLS AND WARDS ISLAND THAT IS SLATED TO BE DIVIDED AMONGST QUEENS DISTRICT LEADERS. I WALK ALMOST EVERYDAY WITH MY DOGS OVER THE 102ND STREET FOOTBRIDGE THAT SPANS THE EAST RIVER TO WARDS ISLAND. I HAVE WALKED THE PEDESTRIAN ROAD FROM 125TH TO RANDALLS ISLAND. THE BUS THAT GOES TO RANDALLS AND WARDS ISLAND STARTS IN MANHATTAN, NOT QUEENS. NOW THAT THE ISLANDS ARE BECOMING DEVELOPED AND BEAUTIFIED, WHY SHOULD IT NOW BE PART OF QUEENS?

THESE REDISTRICTING TACTICS ARE A TRIED AND TRUE METHOD THAT I HAVE SEEN AS AN AIDS ACTIVIST: "DIVIDE AND CONQUER." THIS PROPOSED DIVISION OF THE DISTRICT SEEMS LIKE A PURPOSEFUL, MALICIOUS AND UNDERHANDED TACTIC TO TAKE COUNCIL WOMAN MELISSA OUT OF OFFICE. THIS PROPOSED DIVISION WILL HURT THE COMMUNITY AND I WILL NOT

STAND BY AND LET IT HAPPEN, NOT IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD AND NOT IN MY DISTRICT. I STAND WITH COUNCILWOMAN MELISSA BECAUSE SHE STANDS FOR OUR DISTRICT AND OUR COMMUNITY. THE DISTRICTING COMMISSION NEEDS TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND KEEP NEIGHBORHOODS TOGETHER AND THE DISTRICT LINES INTACT. ADDITIONALLY, IT LOOKS AS IF MY AGENCY WILL FALL OUT OF THE DISTRICT 8 LINES WITH BOTH THE UNITY MAP AND DISTRICT COMMISSION'S MAP. THIS WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNFORTUNATE FOR THE PEOPLE WE SERVE SINCE COUNCIL WOMAN MELISSA HAS PROVIDED SUPPORT FOR MANY YEARS FOR US TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICES FOR MARGINALIZED AND DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITY PEOPLE. TO NOT REMAIN IN DISTRICT 8 LINES WOULD BE A SEVERE BLOW AND WOULD IMPACT DETRIMENTALLY A VERY FRAGILE CONSTITUENCY FROM THIS AREA. I WOULD ASK THAT THE LINES INCLUDE PARK AVENUE TO 125TH STREET AS PART OF THE UNITY MAP SO WE MAY STILL BE PART OF DISTRICT 8.

WE STAND WITH COUNCIL WOMAN MELISSA AND WE STAND UP FOR OUR DISTRICT. PLEASE DO THE RIGHT THING AND KEEP DISTRICT 8 DISTRICT LINES WHERE THEY ARE!

October 2, 2012

TESTIMONY OF SUSAN SUSMAN
AGAINST
REDESIGNING CURRENT UPPER WEST SIDE / MANHATTAN VALLEY DISTRICT

Dear Districting Commission:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my written testimony.

As a resident of [REDACTED] in the Upper West Side for the past 40 years, and as a community activist, I have seen this neighborhood grow and develop a sense of community.

In that context, I am concerned about the proposed break-up of the neighborhood to create a so-called "West Side District." While developers Gluck and the Chetrits referred to the "former Park West Village," the actual Park West Village exists as a single entity and should not be divided. Similarly, Manhattan Valley should not lose 10% of its population to another council member. The Unity Coalition map developed by the Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund, the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, and Latino Justice PRLDEF should be adopted.

Our current Council Member, Melissa Mark-Viverito, has served us well. She has a good understanding of the neighborhood issues, and significantly, she and her office are there for us – inclusively responsive in more than one language.

Without a single, true West Side district, I urge that the Districting Commission keep Council District 8 as it is on the West Side.

My own concerns are affordable housing, land use and schools, and in all those areas, Council Member Mark-Viverito has served us well: we have stronger security in public housing, more funding for schools, and she has taken a strong stand on struggles concerning development.

The participatory budgeting process that she and just 3 other council members have implemented in NYC is vital in bringing our diverse neighborhoods together and promoting real grass-roots democracy.

Our community is richer for its inclusion of residents in current and former Mitchell-Lamas, rent stabilized buildings, market-rate apartments, and public housing. None of them should be excised to join a separate district.

For all these reasons, I support keeping our current District 8 as is, with our current Council Member.



Susan Susman
(for identification only: president,
Central Park Gardens Tenants' Association)

Hearings

From: William Gerena-Rochet [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2012 9:34 AM
To: Hearings
Cc: Melissa Mark Viverito
Subject: District boundary changes

To the members of the Commission:

As has been expressed already, and given that the next November Redistricting Commission Meeting is open to the public, but will not provide an opportunity for public testimony, let me reiterate that La Marqueta needs to be restored to East Harlem/El Barrio's Council District and all of the boundaries of our neighborhood restored to District 8.

The proposed changes are an affront to the community and carried on without authentic representation of its residents and leaders.

Once more it would go on to prove the inherent deficiencies of a democratic process -- if all the testimonies go for naught.

The process of having Commissions seem to be a showcase of business as usual: giving lip service, or rather 'ear-service' before keeping in place what already had been decided upon before the hearings.

But I hope this time around you make an exception and respect the wishes of the community. Otherwise the discourse of the Occupy Wall Street Movement proves that another example of making a mockery out of democracy has taken place.

Eventually this will only serve to expand that discourse so some day Abraham Lincoln's " You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time," will correct our Democracy.

--

William Gerena Rochet

Spanish Harlem/El Barrio