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TESTIMONY TO THE CITY COUNCIL REDISTRICTING
COMMISSION-10/11/12

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony for today's hearing in Brooklyn regarding the proposed redistricting plan for the 46th District as presently constituted. Other obligations prevent me from testifying in person.

Historically, Canarsie has been linked with East Flatbush in many ways. In days when the two communities were ethnically and demographically different, this linkage was the source of political conflict. That is no longer the case.

The neighborhoods have shared Assembly districts, State Senate Districts, Congressional districts and most significantly, they are both completely integrated in a single Community School District which will likely continue to exist long into the future.

I am urging this Commission to draw that portion of Canarsie that is presently in the plan for District 42 into District 45. District 42 is anchored in East New York, a community which appears to have fewer common interests with Canarsie than would District 45. District 45 is anchored in East Flatbush, which like Canarsie is a middle class homeowner community dominated by a Caribbean American population.

This can be accomplished by "wheeling" the district lines of districts 41, 42 and 45 and likely affecting little else.

I would also like to testify about the proposed "Unity Map". The proposal's name is a misnomer, as it proposed unity for some, while creating the opposite for others.

The Unity Map would once again do violence to the integrity of the Madison and Sheepshead Bay communities by attaching its largely white population to a minority district. This would neuter the political clout of this entire community and would represent the third map change this year to do the exact same thing.

Enough is enough.

The Congressional lines took this very same community and put the lion's share in a central Brooklyn district currently represented by Yvette Clarke. The rest of Sheepshead Bay was put in an even more remote district currently represented by Ed Towns.

The State Senate lines are even more appalling, tearing Sheepshead Bay and Madison into at least four separate State Senate districts. The purpose of this was not ethnic but brazenly partisan. The effect, however, was the same, to wit, rendering the entire community totally ineffectual and insignificant in the election of any State Senator.

Enough is enough. The Unity Map would inflict the same harm to the same community. This commission should not countenance this, regardless of any good intentions that the proponents may have. While the residents of Sheepshead Bay are not afforded the protections of the Voting Rights Act, the same principles of fairness must apply. I urge this Commission to do the right thing and reject the Unity Map insofar as it affects the communities that now touch upon the present 46th Council district.

As you know, due to term limits, these lines will not affect me politically. However, as a resident of Sheepshead Bay, and as someone elected to represent all of the people of the 46th Council District, I am asking this Commission to consider the points I have raised in a revised map.

Thank you for your consideration.