

Thank you very much member of the Commission for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Stephen Levin, I am currently City Councilmember for the 33rd District in Brooklyn, which includes the neighborhoods of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, South Williamsburg, The Brooklyn Navy Yard, Vinegar Hill, DUMBO, Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill and Park Slope. As you can see, the 33rd District is remarkably diverse both ethnically and geographically, and I consider it an honor every day to represent all of these great neighborhoods.

First, I would like to thank the commission and the commissioners for the diligence and transparency you have exhibited throughout this process. It is a massive and extremely complex endeavor to balance the various interests that exists, at times at odds with each other, within each of the 51 districts of New York City, in each of the 5 boroughs, and in the City as a whole. I believe that you have so far done so in a way that gives the public confidence in the process and the results.

With regard to the proposed lines of the 33rd District and its neighboring districts, I believe that these lines reflect the population shifts that have occurred in North Brooklyn over the past 10 years. The 33rd District currently has a population of roughly 171,000 people, which is well over the target population of 160,000 for the Council district. Therefore, a geographical decrease is inevitable, and the fact that this commission has proposed to reduce the district at the southeastern edge in Park Slope make logical sense. Under the proposed lines, Park Slope would be redrawn into the 39th District, which would allow all of Park Slope to be represented by a unified Council district. In addition, the commission has proposed including several additional election districts in Northern Bedford-Stuyvesant to the 33rd District. Over the past 10 years, this area has gone from being mostly manufacturing and industrial to significantly residential, as the Orthodox Jewish population in Williamsburg, which is currently almost entirely within the 33rd District, has moved south. This expansion makes logical sense for two reasons. First, this would allow for the Orthodox Jewish community in North Brooklyn to be within a unified Council district. Secondly, this shift would allow for the 35th Council District, which has seen a tremendous increase in Caucasian population over the past 10 years, to maintain its status as a majority minority district, something that I believe is important for the diversity of the Brooklyn Council delegation and the Council as a whole.

There is one small area, however, which has been shifted from the 33rd District to the 34th District, and that is the area commonly referred to as the Broadway Triangle, and which consists of the 78th and 79th ED of the 53rd AD. This area, which has been in the 33rd District for the past ten years, is the site of a rezoning which passed the Council in 2009 and has been the source of litigation in the intervening years. As Councilmember and before I was elected to the Council, I have spent a tremendous amount of time working on this rezoning, and it is my sincere hope that my office will have the opportunity to continue to address the need for a rezoning of the Broadway Triangle in the next term. Therefore, I request of the commission that the area comprised of the 78th and 79th ED's of the 53 AD be redrawn back into the 33rd District.

Thank you very much for your time, consideration, and service to the City of New York.