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ALEXANDER RIAS
Director of BLAC Affairs

TO: NYC Districting Commission
SUBJECT: TESTIMONY re: NYC DISTRICTING, 2ND ROUND

At this critical stage in the redistricting process, the seemingly impersonal dotted lines that represent boundaries via council districts come alive and real people, real voices and real communities emerge united and resolute. And the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus of New York City Council can appreciate the scheduled process that has taken place thus far. And, as expressed in our first-round testimony, the Caucus is happy to know that access and transparency have been a hallmark of this Commission.

This Caucus also understands that the preliminary lines released in September simply represent a draft-based mostly upon numbers—a draft that serves to propel conversation and discourse about the future of this city. It is expected, now that the voices of the people are heard, that more realistic lines be drawn that keep and bring communities of common interest together, instead of dividing them; lines that help communities grow wholly, instead of stunting their progress by fragmenting them.

The Black, Latino and Asian Caucus simply wishes to echo the voices of the more than 4 million New Yorkers in 27 council districts that we represent: that communities of color, as protected by the Voting Rights Act, and communities of common interest shall be granted the full ability to choose representatives by the full power of their vote. The new lines of this city should not, and cannot deem this right to representation diminished. It simply cannot!

Moreover, boons to community pride, tradition and culture do more for a community than census numbers can describe. It is our expectation that as the Commission continues seek balance between numbers and cultures, lines and community pride, voters and the future of this city’s most devoted. It is expected that the Commission do so within the full requirement of the law, and by truly listening to the resounding responses that it is receiving in this second round.

Lastly, this Caucus suggests that an additional round of public comment be scheduled following the release of the second drafted maps—if allowed by New York City Charter and all laws governing this process. This critical phase should be open and transparent, to allow the voice of the people to be resoundingly clear. Our communities’ voices will continue to be heard!

Sincerely,

Robert Jackson
BLAC Co-Chair

Fernando Cabrera
BLAC Co-Chair