

Good evening.

My name is Avi Spitzer, I serve as the Executive Director of the Sephardic Community Federation (SCF). SCF is the umbrella public policy organization representing the Sephardic Jewish community of greater New York.

The bulk of the Sephardic community's population is located in Brooklyn and I am here today to testify specifically about areas of concern to the Brooklyn Sephardic community. First, I am concerned that the proposed maps would dilute the strength of the Sephardic Jewish community in the Midwood area along Avenues I thru K. Previously, the area from East 9th Street to East 17th Street was all in the 44th Council District. Under the new proposal, Avenue I would be in the 40th and Avenue J would be in the 45th Council Districts. The SCF thinks that would hurt the community and we strongly recommend that you restore the old lines that have this area completely within the 44th Council District. The 44th is home to the majority of the Sephardic Jewish community and to remove these blocks would dilute the Sephardic community's vote. What's more, major community institutions like Yeshiva of Flatbush would be displaced under this proposal.

What's more, I would ask that the rest of Avenue I through J, up through 26th Street, be included in either the 44th or 48th Council district. That strip would be orphaned in the 45th Council District.

More generally, we support keeping Marine Park in the 46th Council District. However, we would recommend that the Jewish community from Avenue I to Kings Highway from Nostrand to Flatbush Avenue either be included in this very same 46th Council District or be included in the 48th Council District to maximize communities of interest. Also, we support the move of Manhattan Beach from the 48th to the 46th Council District as a similar population.

Finally, we oppose any proposal to create a so-called "Super-Jewish" district. That is why we join with our neighbors in Boro Park in asking that Boro Park have two members of the City Council representing it, specifically the 44th and 39th council districts rather than one.

Thank you for your consideration.