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To: NYC Districting Commission

Submitted by:

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City Council Redistricting Testimony

Good afternoon, my name is Yiatin Chu. I came to NYC as an immigrant at 9 years old and have called this city my home for the past 45 years. I am here today to testify as President of the Asian Wave Alliance which I co founded with other Asian community leaders in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn. We are advocating for the interest of Asian communities to be kept whole in the new city council districts. As many of these areas are not large enough to be a standalone district, other neighborhoods grouped with ours will be very important to ensure that our values and issues are authentically represented, not minimized and marginalized. While Chinatown is rapidly becoming gentrified, with surrounding streets full of younger and more affluent residents; the boundaries of communities in Queens and Brooklyn have expanded.

Over the past decade, Asians have become the fastest growing racial group in NYC: up 43% in Brooklyn and up 29% in Queens. Like most immigrants, we are holding multiple jobs, caring for multigenerational households, and navigating a complicated public school system for our children with challenging language barriers. However, several distinct events have led many Asians to become conscious of how critical it is to be cognizant of how politics have been affecting our community..

In June 2018, former Mayor de Blasio attempted to modify admissions criteria for specialized HS which according to the Independent Budget Office would have reduced the number of Asian students in half. His administration wrongfully stereotyped Asians as being part of a privileged class in his narrative of a segregated “tale of two cities.”

That couldn't be further from the truth - 21.1% of Asian students are living in poverty and 42% are linguistically isolated.

De Blasio and the former city council plans for closing Rikers and building borough-based jails has enraged Asian residents in Chinatown and Kew Gardens. The city's plan to place homeless shelters throughout the boroughs with an unfair saturation in our neighborhoods have drawn pleas for community engagement. Intentionally or not, many shelters are sited in busy commercial areas and multiple nearby elementary schools and daycare centers in our neighborhoods. With surging crime and anti-Asian assaults, our quality of life has been consistently disregarded and we are scared of just living our daily lives in NYC. We know that electing representatives that share our concerns and values are more important than ever. We urge the Commission to give us the fair representation we deserve as a community of interest that is protected by voting rights.

I share with you the following Asian communities with directional boundaries to keep us whole.

Brooklyn - Bensonhurst

65th St: 18th Avenue to Bay Pkwy

W 6 and Kings Hwy

McDonald and 86th St.

Bath Ave and Stillwell

Benson Ave to 18th Ave.

(see map)

Bensonhurst is currently divided among FOUR council districts.

Manhattan - Chinatown

N/S: Canal St to FDR

E/W: Essex St to Broadway

We are asking the district to include Fidi and Tribeca where families prioritize rigorous education and accelerated opportunities, and support the police for community patrol and public safety.

Brooklyn - Sunset Park

N/S: 45th st to 75th st

E/W: 6th ave to 10th ave

Sunset Park Central (Chinese) is combined with a neighboring district with different priorities that drowned out Asian representation, similar to Manh's Chinatown.

Queens - Flushing

N/S: 20th Avenue to Booth Memorial Ave.

E/W: Utopia Pkwy to College Point Blvd

Queens - Bayside

N/S: Bell Blvd to LIE

E/W: Utopia Pkwy to Cross Island Pkwy

Thank you so much for your consideration and we hope the new city council maps will give us fair representation in the next 10 years.

Map for Bensonhurst

