

**From:** Aarian Punter <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 8, 2022 10:22 AM  
**To:** Public Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony for D9 - Do not change the map.

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Good morning,

I am Aarian Punter, I live and work in Harlem. I am a 3rd Generation Harlemiter going back to the early 1920's. In addition, to my work as a Psychotherapist, I am also the Executive Director of Rucker Park Prep, a Summer Youth Athletic and Mentoring program. Our Programs take place at Holcombe Rucker Park located at 155 street and Frederick Douglass Blvd.

I am rejecting and **Do NOT** support the attempt to redistrict District 9 to include it as a part of Washington Heights. This particular area of west 155th street should remain in tact. There are values and unique historical matters and concerns that particularly impact the African- American community. It's important to mention how residents and it's leaders in District 9 have been historically among the most politically active Black communities in the nation. While seemingly geographically located at the far end of Harlem, there is no question in my mind how connected its residents are to their neighbors who live below 155th streets. These neighbors include youth (0-24) Seniors, working class and the physically and emotionally challenged. In this area of Harlem, New York we communicate and actively informally and formally participate in local social, cultural and political activities with each other, travel within the district to shop, work and vote in the same interest as African Americans people.

Washington Heights and its reputation has its place in the culture diaspora. These facts are both powerful, noteworthy and historic. There is room for every culture in New York City to express itself too itself and among itself without isolating anyone from one another. Central Harlem includes 155 and Frederick Douglass Blvd/8th) It has never been considered a part of the Heights because it simply is not -nor should it be considered a voting block for the Heights. It is my concern that redistribution of Political power in this moment is the introduction of further isolation from connected political power, and resources intentionally being re-distributed to African-American residences outside of the 155 street and Frederick Douglass Blvd corridor who have not historically valued the African-American community.

-Aarian Punter, MS, LMSW

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