



July 15, 2022

Mr. Dennis M. Walcott  
Chair

Mr. John Flateau PhD  
Executive Director  
New York City Districting Commission  
253 Broadway, 3 Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Walcott and Dr. Flateau:

Once again this body of elected public officials and community leaders, representing all parts of Harlem – from the south at Lakeview Apartments on East 106 Street to the north at Ralph J. Rangel Houses on West 159 Street, forming the 9<sup>th</sup> Council District in Manhattan, with a unified voice regarding the drawing of the 2022 City Council District lines. As the New York City Districting Commission has commenced and completed its preliminary public hearings and plans, we again request that the next round of scheduled hearings include a Harlem location with maximum promotion and outreach to the community. We can assist in finding a location.

We are relieved that the NYC Council Districts Preliminary Maps do not exclude the Polo Grounds, Ralph J. Rangel Houses and Holcombe Rucker Playground. Nonetheless, we are now faced with deep concern for the southern tip of Harlem. The preliminary plan calls for the removal of The Heritage at Schomburg Plaza, Clinton Houses, Lehman Houses and Lakeview Apartments. They are all a part and unique to historic Harlem.

Schomburg Plaza, an apartment complex at the northeast corner of Central Park with two octagon-shaped 35-story towers on Fifth Avenue and one 11-story rectangular slab on Madison Avenue, was named after writer and activist Arthur Schomburg, a Black Puerto Rican, who settled in Harlem and developed a famous collection of books as well as other materials about blacks. The housing development had world-famous tragedies, but was also known for hard-working residents, producing outstanding public leaders like Bill Perkins and William Allen, two of only three black men to serve as a county elections chief for Manhattan. Clinton Houses and Lehman Houses, owned and operated by the New York City Housing Authority, are culturally connected to historic Harlem in community interests and marginalization. In 2014, Clinton tenants sued NYCHA for negligence resulting in disrepair and public health hazards. Lehman Houses had similar challenges.

At the most southern end of the four developments that serve as historic Harlem front doors is Lakeview Apartments. Lakeview was saved from totally losing its Mitchell-Lama status. For all four housing developments, Duke Ellington Circle, named in 1995 after the great jazz artist that lived in Harlem and The Africa Center, just opening, are at their doorsteps

and serve as a grand entrance into historic Harlem. Another beautiful opening to historic Harlem is the Harlem Meer in Central Park. The lake was transformed from a large, untamed swamp, into the centerpiece of New York's Central Park in 1857. In essence, the institutions like Boys & Girls Harbor, a new museum that celebrates the importance of African heritage and a monument of Duke Ellington at his piano, neatly provide a ribbon for the first blocks of historic Harlem as well as its political, racial and cultural composition. The very gate of the northern end of Central Park, which gives entrance to the Harlem Meer, just dedicated last year and named the Exonerated -- honoring the five young men that were wrongfully accused and convicted of the heinous rape of the "Central Park Jogger," which occurred nearby. Three of the five resilient, now men, lived and still have family in The Heritage at Schomburg Plaza. The tragedy and later exoneration of these men still resonate throughout and for black families that are raising black boys into men. The exoneration and the naming of the gate is a recognition of a community struggle to recognize the injustice that has been historic for blacks in Harlem and in America.

Thanks for this opportunity. Please reach out to Senator Cordell Cleare's office for a Harlem public hearing location.

Respectfully,



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Senator Cordell Cleare  
NYS 30<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District



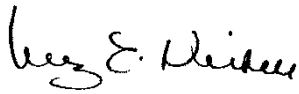
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Senator Robert Jackson  
NYS 31<sup>st</sup> Senatorial District



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Assemblymember Al Taylor  
NYS 71<sup>st</sup> Senatorial District



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Assemblymember Inez Dickens  
NYS 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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Honorable Keith L. T. Wright  
New York County Leader  
& Former NYS Assemblymember



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Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
Former Representative of the  
U.S. Congress



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Assemblyman Edward Gibbs  
NYS 68<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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State Committeeman Londel Davis  
NYS 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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District Leader Wilma Brown Phillips  
NYS 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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District Leader William A. Allen  
NYS 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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District Leader Ernestine Bell Temple  
NYS 71<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



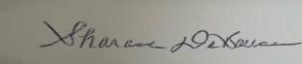
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District Leader Grisel Ortiz-Thompson  
NYS 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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District Leader Hilda Solomon  
NYS 68<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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District Leader Sharase DeBouse  
NYS 68<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



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Honorable David A. Paterson  
Former NYS Governor