

Good afternoon Redistricting Commission:

My name is Karen Blondel and I have lived in District 38 for the past 40 years in the Red Hook Houses and enjoyed social cohesion across District 39 which is Gowanus, Carroll Gardens and Boerum Hill. I am the Red Hook West Resident Association President and I had to take it upon myself along with other board members and community partners to quickly create a fair poll and testimonial because when it comes to our City Councilmember Alexa Aviles and our State Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes we are continually being left in the dark or gaslighted whenever they feel that public housing residents who are not immigrants but the remnants of the great black and Indian migration from the south of north America to the North have different views or challenges. When I first moved to Red Hook DiBrenzia from Carroll Gardens was the city council member and I know this because I wrote him about the Smith and 9th Street escalators that were always broke. To day I testify in gratitude, to your commission for finally returning us to a district that has more public housing because it would include other developments like Gowanus and Wyckoff Gardens..

I am delighted your new district proposed (Option #1) would put Red Hook in with other small neighborhoods of shared needs and issues in terms of climate change, NYCHA, school districts, and would align us with our Community Board 6.

Sunset Park will not lose any Latino power has cited by our Councilmember Aviles, what they will lose is the power to be the next overseer of public housing when we do not share the same issues. As I sat through these hearings listening to testimony after testimony it occurs to me naturally or unnaturally occurring cultural districts are gaining power while public housing is housing black Americans who deserve the same chance to have like minded folks speaking for them. By breatoring Red Hook with Carroll Gardens and Gowanus you will have met all your deliverables in regards to diversity and inclusion. I feel NYCHA developments should be a district in their own right as descendants of slaves, free blacks and black indians. We have a right to create our own social infrastructure and cohesion because we are organized across Red Hook, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus Eyckoff Gardens and Boerum Hill.

I can say as the lead facilitator of The Gowanus Neighborhood Coalition for Justice and the Founder of the Public Housing Civic Association, we are tired of others using us to their own political advantage through gerrymandering. We do not want to be with Sunset Park and while my community was struggling to get a 1200 stimulus our elected officials were passing 15000 debit cards to people who do not pay into unemployment insurance instead of bringing the policy issue to our attention equitably.

I have about 50 testimonies to submit on behalf of the Red Hook Community and we look forward to this commission sticking with the proposed map which reunites us.

Thank you!

Karen Blondel

RHWRA President

