



August 22, 2022

Greetings to Commissioners of the The New York City Districting Commission and thank you for allowing us to speak on behalf of the communities we represent. I come today to speak on behalf of Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) and the Hispanic and Black communities at large in the Bronx. KHCC has served the Bronx Community for nearly 50 years. KHCC's main campus is located at 3067 - 3101 Kingsbridge Terrace, Bronx, NY 10463.

KHCC was founded in 1974 by three passionate female activists who petitioned City Hall to transform a former Bronx police station into a settlement house in the underserved, under-resourced neighborhood of Kingsbridge Heights. Today, KHCC is one of Bronx's premier multiservice community-based organization reaching over 5,500 children, youth, and adults annually across six locations and 60 child care providers throughout the Bronx and Northern Manhattan. KHCC is guided by its mission to provide resources to empower Bronx residents from cradle to career to advance education and wellbeing for a vibrant community. It achieves this in an environment that fosters academic milestones, literacy, mental health, nutrition, technology, and the arts.

KHCC is distinguished from other organizations by its vertically aligned continuum of services designed to support individuals throughout their life cycle and its highly integrated service delivery model that allows participants of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities to learn and grow together. Our diverse, extensive program offerings synergistically work together to help participants achieve self-sufficiency, self-improvement, and cultural integration. A member of United Neighborhood Houses of New York City, KHCC embraces the settlement house model of community development and involvement. We are partners to Bronx residents, helping them forge their own destiny as a unified, cohesive community. Our educational and personal empowerment programming supports community members across the life cycle with offerings



across five divisions: early childhood, youth, adult and family, garden and nutrition and emergency case management services.

I respectfully submit my testimony regarding concerns on the Bronx districts particularly NYC Council Districts 11 and 14 which have an impact on voting power of community members and access to raise concerns of issue and needs. Approximately, 1400 individuals participating in KHCC's programming live in District 14 as well as 1300 in District 11, respectively. We are also concerned about further fragmentation of the community in the proposed redistricting of both of these Council Districts.

Proper Representation and Accountability

We recommend reconsidering how districts are drawn particularly to address the needs of community members in order to protect populations moving from one district to another in which would dilute the voting power of Black and Hispanic populations. District 14 represents 70% Hispanic, 20% Black, 2% Asian, 2% White and 1% racially mixed populations. KHCC serves low- and moderate-income individuals residing in the Bronx: 73% Hispanic, 12% Black, 12% racially mixed, and 3% White populations. District 11 represents 51% Hispanic, 26% White, 12% Black, 7% Asian and 1% racially mixed populations. As a result, communities of color voting groups would decrease by 20% moving from District 14 into District 11 as the maps are currently proposed.

The majority of KHCC's participants are immigrants or the children of immigrants, with 64% speaking a language other than English in the home, majority Spanish speaking. District 14 represents a primarily Spanish speaking population whereas District 11 represents a primarily English speaking population. On average, 33% of neighbors in the District 11 and 44% in District 14 respectively are foreign born.

Recommendation: As the 1965 federal Voting Rights Act forbids new district maps from diluting the voting power of racial and language minority groups, and the New York City Charter also



includes a similar provision that ensures “fair and effective representation” for minority groups, we recommend the Commission to draw both of these districts in a way that secures racial and language minority voting power. We recommend that District 14 maintain its current lineation near KHCC in which the District continues from the Major Deegan to 234th Street (approximately 2500 W 234th Street, Bronx, NY 10463) along Fort Independence (approximately 3415 Fort Independence Street, Bronx, NY 10463) to the Jerome Reservoir (approximately 3163 Sedgwick Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463) . From there, continue south of the Reservoir to Strong Street Park (2781 Reservoir Avenue, Bronx, NY 10463) to 2 Bedford Park Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10468 where the District’s Northwest corner would reach 2939 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468 and follow South to the District’s Southern most part.

Thank you once again to the Commissioners for taking time to listen. We strongly urge you to consider the impact redistricting will have on Black and Hispanic as well as Spanish-speaking communities in the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and in the community. Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret Della
Chief Executive Officer