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Testimony of State Senator Brad Hoylman To the New York City Redistricting Commission

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Redistricting Commission. I am State Senator Brad Hoylman, and I represent State Senate District 27 which includes Hell's Kitchen. I am testifying today in support of keeping Hell's Kitchen as united as possible, ideally within one City Council District.

The proposed redistricting map breaks up Hell's Kitchen into three separate City Council districts. The Hell's Kitchen neighborhood stretches from Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River, between West 34th and West 59th Streets. Hell's Kitchen is a vibrant and politically active community with a strong record of fighting for affordable housing, schools, parks, small businesses, and LGBTQ+ rights. Hell's Kitchen is also the site of the Clinton Special District, which was pioneered in 1973 to preserve the residential character of the community and ensure that housing remained affordable to a range of income groups.

Hell's Kitchen is also fully included in the boundaries of Community Board 4. Having Council Districts informed by and, to the extent practicable, consistent with the Community Board lines makes it possible for the Community Board and local elected officials to work on initiatives for the neighborhood with a more powerful, united, and effective voice.

Hell's Kitchen is also a diverse neighborhood and has seen a significant increase in Hispanic and Asian residents since the last census. Hispanic, Asian-American, Black, and multi-racial communities now make up most of the district's population. The preliminary map would split Hell's Kitchen into three different majority white City Council districts, potentially in violation of the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I urge the Redistricting Commission to closely consult the Unity Map, which was developed by leading voting rights advocacy organizations representing people of color in New York City. This map would keep Hell's Kitchen whole. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.