

April G. Tyler
Testimony before NYC Districting Commission
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Good evening, I am April Tyler, a long time resident of West Harlem, a long time community activist and former Democratic District Leader. While I initially agreed with Council Member Jackson that CD 7 didn't need to be radically altered because of the natural cohesiveness of the communities that border the Hudson River in Upper Manhattan, I have come to realize that CD 10's dramatically low Census numbers required equally dramatic adjustments in Upper Manhattan's CDs.

The preliminary lines proposed by the Commission though, are to put it simply--just plain wrong. The northwest boundary of CD 7 which splits 142nd St from Amsterdam to Riverside Drive down the middle makes little sense as this is a residential block comprised mainly of Homeowners, many of whom are members or active participants of CB 9 and the Hamilton Heights Homeowners' Association. They are also residents who use the same subway stop, markets, local park, etc. Clearly this and the area immediately to the north are a Community of Interest and are contiguous. This is just one example of an unnatural boundary--in the interest of time--I won't go through others.

I proposed a map altering CD 7 which I thought cut the district along more natural community boundaries--major streets, markers from one neighborhood to the next, etc. My map, however, did not conform closely enough with the Commission's guidelines (namely population equality). I have subsequently redrawn and respectfully resubmit a map of CD 7 which more closely conforms with the population requirements. Additionally, because of the changes in CD 7, population in the surrounding districts changed, I therefore slightly altered those. I hope that community members will review the maps and that the Commission seriously consider these changes.

I would lastly like to add a point about Minority representation in Manhattan. Understanding that the Commission's charge is not to look at voting data, but population data (population data in particular districts being "Majority Minority"), I am a bit concerned that the CDs that are currently represented by Council Members of Color, may be reduced given the way that the lines are drawn and the voting strength of different populations. One of the main reasons people advocated for the increase in the number of Council Members when the NYC Charter was changed, was to increase Minority representation in the Council. I do hope that this Commission does not inadvertently cast this important goal aside in its hunt for equality in population throughout the borough. I thank you for your time and attention.

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