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JEWISH CAUCUS

October 18, 2022

Hon. Adrienne Adams
Speaker
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Madam Speaker,

As required by the City Charter, I am writing to request that the Districting Commission would consider serious changes in the proposed map of the 47th District in Brooklyn.

Bay Ridge should not be included in the 47th District together with Coney Island and Marlboro Houses since they are very distant from each other and have different socioeconomic status and demographics. By connecting low rise middle class Bay Ridge with high rise NYCHA Marlboro Houses through a five and half miles corridor (two block stretch), the Commission created a very odd shape of the District. This long thin "tunnel" connection between two very distant and distinct communities could be a ground for a future lawsuit about the pure gerrymandering.

I also request that the Commission reunite all five buildings at Amalgamated Warbasse Houses, a 60 years-old Mitchell Lama housing co-op, into the 47th District. The proposed map divided this neighborhood into two Council Districts - 47th and 48th. The Warbasse community historically was a part of the 47th District and it should not be cut in two pieces effectively denying about 8,000 local residents a right to be represented by one Council Member.

Luna Park on West 12 Street is also a Mitchell Lama housing co-op located just a few minutes walk away from Warbasse Houses and I request to include it into the boundaries of the 47th District - together with Coney Island. In fact, it would be fair, logical and consistent with the City Charter to include parts of Brighton Beach (between West 12 Street and Coney Island Avenue) into the boundaries of the 47th District. All of these local communities are represented by the same civic institutions and located in the same Districts of the NYS Assembly, NYS Senate and the U.S. Congress.

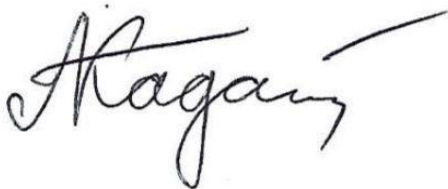
The Commission excluded almost the entirety of Gravesend, Homecrest and Bensonhurst from the 47th District. I request to return parts of these friendly neighboring communities back into the 47th District - together with parts of Bath Beach. Specifically, I request to include a small section of Bensonhurst - between Stillwell Avenue and Bay Parkway, between Benson Avenue and 78th Street - in the 47th District.

I am privileged to represent a very diverse District and many community leaders from Southern Brooklyn in the last several months expressed their clear desire to keep communities of interest and neighborhoods together for the next 10 years. Numerous letters opposing the proposed oddly shaped map of the 47th District were sent to the Commission by the U.S. Congress Member Hakeem Jeffries, State Senator Diane Savino, Assembly Member William Colton, countless leaders of African American, Pakistani American, Russian Jewish American, Ukrainian American, Uzbeki American, Georgian American, Italian American and Sephardic Jewish American communities. All of their letters and testimonies were completely ignored and the Commission sent to the City Council a map that disenfranchises historically marginalized communities in Coney Island and Marlboro Houses, cuts Warbasse in half and splits the rest of the 47th District in several pieces. That configuration will negatively affect many Southern Brooklyn communities, will separate families and schools, will deny neighborhoods valuable resources and the attention of their Council Member.

I strongly oppose this new map and urge both the Speaker and the Commission to listen to Southern Brooklyn community leaders and residents and to make significant changes. The 47th District should include Coney Island, Sea Gate, Luna Park, Warbasse, parts of Brighton Beach, Beach Haven, Gravesend, including Marlboro Houses, parts of Bensonhurst and Bath Beach. This way the 47th District would be compact and communities would stay intact.

Thank you very much for your attention and consideration!

Council Member Ari Kagan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ari Kagan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ari Kagan
Council Member, District 47