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**From:** Jackie Mariano <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 27, 2022 1:48 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony TODAY at 6/27 hearing at York College

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To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to testify at tonight's hearing. Here is the testimony I would like to read:

My name is Jackie Mariano. I am a resident of Elmhurst and am 33 years old. I was born and raised in Elmhurst, and have resided in Elmhurst most of my life. Today, I am a community organizer in Queens, a private practice immigration attorney who works from home, and an adjunct professor at Hunter College's Asian American Studies Program.

My whole life and work revolves around my experience as a Filipino American from Elmhurst and a desire to serve the Asian American community in Queens that has made me who I am today. My parents, Filipino immigrants, met in Elmhurst in the 1980s while they found their bearings in this new country. My mother, a nurse, was recruited from the Philippines to work at Elmhurst Hospital. Her career was bookended by health crises as she joined the fight against AIDS in the 1980s, then COVID-19 today. Other Filipino nurses she arrived with became my aunties and uncles, their kids like my cousins. We built a chosen family in Elmhurst and thrived because the APA community, made of up people from various countries of origin, had similar struggles, interests, and cultural practices that caused us to create a community of solidarity and unity.

Asian American have navigated Elmhurst with confidence despite the complications of mixed status families. For decades, Elmhurst has been a landing pad for Asian immigrants, their extended families, and newly arrived generations of migrants. Broadway has been a lifeline. It's where we found fresh groceries and imported products at Top Line and Hong Kong Supermarket that offered pan-Asian ingredients that reminded us of home. Where you could find shops that catered to specific nationalities. My family and I went to Jeffeli, a Filipino video rental and 1-hour photo shop, every week. There we would rent the latest comedy from the Philippines, develop rolls of film, and buy phone cards to call family back home.

The APA community should be kept whole in Elmhurst and Woodside in two separate city council districts. Elmhurst's APA community is distinct in its comprehensive history, economy, and culture. To interrupt this would fracture the community networks locally and internationally that have built over decades to help APAs live a life of dignity and respect in Queens. Especially as incidents of anti-Asian hate arise, the APA community must be able to have a safe, culturally relevant place to call home. As Queens-born and recently migrated APA youth come of age, they need a united and historically and culturally informed community to nurture their talents and potential for a future free from hate and discrimination. Without Elmhurst whole, I would not have found my own voice and identity as a Filipino American.

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**Jackelyn Mariano, Esq.**  
Honorific: Ms./Atty. | Pronouns: she/her/hers

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