

**QUEENS TODAY**  
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**HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR: QUEENS** is celebrating the holiday in a number of ways, including hosting a Lunar New Year parade on Saturday.

## 'If it looks like gerrymandering'

Legislature's redistricting maps creates incumbent stronghold in Queens and stretches one district to Westchester

By Jacob Keys  
Queens Daily Eagle

After the bipartisan committee looked for the best way to draw the state's 19th legislative district, with Queens voters fill to the Democratic-controlled State Legislature, which released the plan for New York's Congressional districts over the weekend.

While many Queens voters will see their district mostly from their home, for some



Queens Rep. Grace Meng introduced legislation to establish a federal holiday for Lunar New Year.

Photo by Julienne Schaer via NYC Go

puter area offering patrons up to 20 pages of free printing.

Monday through Friday from 2:30 to 6 p.m. Teens will need a library card to use the facility.

# Opinion: Don't let chaos distract from trafficking risks

By **ENDGBV Voices Committee**  
Special to the Eagle

It's been a chaotic first month of 2022 for the city of New York. Between varying covid strains spreading among the population and in schools after the holidays, vaccine issues, remote school concerns, several tragic subway and violent gun incidents, we have been continuously tested. During the tumult, we also had Mayor Eric Adams accept the helm of leadership, and who, in his inaugural speech, vowed that as a city, "we will not be controlled by crises."

In addition to starting us off on a new journey around the sun, January is also Human Trafficking Awareness month, and the 18th commemoration of National Stalking Awareness month. Both events are calls of action for society to recognize and respond to these very serious crimes.

Human trafficking is modern day slavery hiding in plain sight. According to [Unitas.ngo](http://Unitas.ngo), it is the "exploitation of another person for labor, domestic servitude or commercial sexual activity by force, fraud or coercion." Human beings are treated as property and are sold to others without their consent. The more vulnerable members of society are targeted by traffickers, including children, the drug addicted, the poor and LGBTQ youth. It is

different from human smuggling, which is transporting people across borders, and not necessarily their exploitation, which involves prostitution, debt bondage, and forced marriage or labor. Globally, human trafficking is a huge business, secondary only to the illegal drug trade, with women accounting for 71 percent of those affected and men, 21 percent. In the United States, an estimated 400,000 people are modern day slaves. New York State's own efforts to combat trafficking has been growing, and in December of 2021, Governor Kathy Hochul signed the Survivors of Trafficking Attainment Releif Together (START) Act, which provides greater protections for survivors of human trafficking by allowing them to clear criminal records associated with their lives as victims of exploitation.

Within New York State also is an Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking, a website and hotline that provides law enforcement with tools to investigate and prosecute human trafficking. The task force also "collects data on the number of victims and the effectiveness of laws, evaluates approaches to public awareness, makes recommendations and issues an annual report."

Stalking is a silent threat. It is unwanted surveillance by an individual/and or a group and it

can be very dangerous for the victim. Nationally 7.5 million people are stalked every year. Most stalking victims know their stalker in some capacity. Stalking behaviors are interrelated to harassment and intimidation and it is a problem for life. These behaviors include monitoring, observing, and following the victims; and are usually very threatening. Women are at a greater risk of stalking victimization than men. Nationally, 54% of female homicide victims reported stalking to the police before they were killed by their intimate partner. Victims experience unwanted phone calls and cyberstalking — emails, and surveillance of their social media pages. Victims also experience threats made to them and their families by the stalker.

D, a survivor leader on our committee, says, "My own personal experience with stalking changed my entire life. It interrupts, it interferes with all aspects, and daily planning of your life."

In 1999, New York State was one of the first to pass the stalking law and to recognize stalking as an offense. The law defines the crime as "repeated harassment that creates a credible threat of harm". Victims of stalking usually seek orders of protection, or restraining orders, to keep offenders

away. Fear is contextual and we must understand that the definition of stalking includes that a reasonable person would feel fear. Believe and support victims.

The ENDGBV VOICES Committee is a survivor-led group that serves as a voice of hope and change. We share our stories and experiences to raise awareness of intimate partner violence and its impacts, outreach to affected communities, and make recommendations for improved systemic responses, as we work towards a future in which all New Yorkers, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or immigration status, feel supported in pursuing lives free from abuse.

If you or someone you know is a victim of DV, we are here for you, and you are never alone. Help is available by calling 311 to find a Family Justice Center in your borough. They can assist with safety planning, applying for public benefits, mental health services and legal help for orders of protection, divorce, and immigration. One can also call the 24-Hour NYC Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800-621-HOPE. Other resources and support can be accessed by searching the City's HOPE Resource Directory online at [www.nyc.gov/NYCHOPE](http://www.nyc.gov/NYCHOPE).