

8-2021

New York State Redistricting Hearings Summary

Marissa Zanfardino

New York Law School, marissa.zanfardino@law.nyls.edu

Scott Matsuda

New York Law School, scott.matsuda@law.nyls.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/redistricting_resources

Recommended Citation

Zanfardino, Marissa and Matsuda, Scott, "New York State Redistricting Hearings Summary" (2021).
Redistricting Resources. 6.

https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/redistricting_resources/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the NY Census and Redistricting Institute at DigitalCommons@NYLS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Redistricting Resources by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@NYLS.



WE ARE NEW YORK'S LAW SCHOOL

New York Independent Redistricting Commission Public Hearing Overview

This summary reviews key themes and points raised during the Summer public hearings held by the N.Y.S. Independent Redistricting Commission. It also provides a list of organizations from each region that were identified and the communities of concern that were highlighted.

Access the N.Y.S. Independent Redistricting website [here](#). Watch or listen to all sessions [here](#).

Nassau/Suffolk Key Takeaways: Several speakers commented on the obvious “packing and cracking” of BIPOC communities in the existing district lines. There were many requests for the redistricting process to respect school district lines when drawing Senate and Assembly districts. There was naming (see below) of specific towns that split in half by district lines. Several people expressed concern with being grouped with different socioeconomic groups as their concerns were very different.

Organizations Named:

- Delta Sigma Theta
- Elmont Cultural Center
- League of Women Voters Nassau
- Make the Road NY
- Mapping our Future Coalition (New York Immigration Coalition)
- SEPA Mujer

Communities of Concern:

- Assembly District 5 (should be kept together)
- Bayshore (concerns over Bayshore being divided)
- Bayville (concerns over Bayville being divided)
- Brentwood (concerns over Brentwood being divided)
- District 3 & 4 (concerns over cracking and packing of districts)
- Elmont (concerns over Elmont being divided)
- Freeport (concerns over Freeport being divided)
- Hempstead (the town's five villages Lawrence, Cedarhurst, Woodmere, Hewlett, and Inwood are divided)
- Hicksville (concerns of Hicksville being gerrymandered)
- Islip (concerns over Islip being divided; should consider communities of interest)
- Lake Ronkonkoma (should be grouped with Ronkonkoma)
- Long Beach (not compact; do not consider school district lines)
- Riverhead (concerns over Riverhead being divided)
- Rockville Center (concerns of over-population creation dilution)
- Sayville (concerns about Sayville being divided)

- Stony Brook (has three villages that are divided with current lines; concerns of splitting between 3 state senate districts)

Access the specific recording for the **Nassau/Suffolk** hearing [here](#).

Queens Key Takeaways: Concerns were raised to create a set of districts that bring together the South Asian dominated communities of Richmond Hill and Ozone Park. The borough is about 25% White, 21% Black, 28% Hispanic, and 27% Asian, but the discussion and speaker representation were heavily weighted toward the concerns of Asian communities – in part because those communities have been specifically cracked and gerrymandered in the past.

Organizations Named:

- AALDEF/Unity Mapping Coalition
- Asian American Community Coalition on Redistricting and Democracy (ACCORD)
- APA Voices Redistricting Coalition
- Caribbean Equality Project
- Central Queens Redistricting Coalition
- Hispanic Federation
- Jahajee Sisters
- Korean Community Services
- Minkown Center
- South Asian Community Services

Communities of Concern:

- Assembly District 24 (do not extend)
- Assembly District 27 (college point should not be in this assembly district)
- Bay Terrace (gets attached to Congressional Dist. mostly in Nassau, ignored by Rep.)
- Bayside & Auburndale (should be kept whole)
- Central Queens (including Forrest Hills) (should be its own district)
- Dutch Kills/Long Island City (Assembly District 37 gerrymandered)
- Eastern Queens - Senate District 11 (Senate and Assembly districts are drawn to crack Asian communities and unite White ones)
- Elmhurst (concerns about Elmhurst being divided)
- Flushing (should remain the center of any district)
- Forest Hills (concern over the area being drawn as more cohesive)
- Glen Oaks to Briarwood (keep together)
- Glen Oaks and nearby communities (large South Asian populations are split up)
- Jackson Heights & Elmhurst (very different and should not be grouped together)

- Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Corona (should be kept together for districts)
- Jamaica (keep as the center of districts; keep the community together)
- Kew Garden Hills (Orthodox community should not be split apart and should be grouped with Jewish neighborhoods to the East of it)
- North Queens/Central Queens (Assembly District 27 is gerrymandered and runs vertically from College Point down to Key Gardens)
- Northern Corona and Jackson Heights (its Latinx populations should be kept together)
- Rego Park in Central Queens (divided, no representation living in its split districts)
- Richmond Hill (should be its own district; Richmond Hill should be separated from the eastern part of Van Wyck)
- Richmond Hill & Ozone Park (should be together and a South Asian Community of Interest)
- Ridgewood (should be a proper Queens district)
- Southern Queens (concerns about it being divided)
- Sunnyside (divided, and should be grouped with Astoria and Woodside; more specifically there was a concern for keeping Sunnyside as or do not split with Ridgewood for the Assembly district)
- Other: Large and growing South Asian communities or Queens constitute a separate community of interest and have large enough populations for distinct districts

Access the specific recording for the **Queens** hearing [here](#).

Manhattan/Bronx Key Takeaways: This hearing featured many speakers seeking to maintain the voting power and cohesive districts of the west side of Manhattan. There was one concern of keeping the Dominican neighborhoods of South Bronx and Upper Manhattan connected. There was also one concern for moving one small central Bronx neighborhood into a different district. There were several concerns raised for keeping the portion of the Lower East Side connected to Sunset Park (Congressional District 7), which has support from folks from APA Voices and Latinx folks. There was concern for not consolidating Manhattan's Congressional Districts.

Organizations Named:

- AALDEF/Unity Mapping Coalition
- APA Voices
- Chinese Progressive Association
- Dominicanos USA
- NY Immigration Coalition/Mapping Our Future

Communities of Concern:

- 29th Senate District – Small portion of UWS, East Harlem and South Bronx (gerrymandered district groups communities that don't belong together)
- 31st Senate District (concern that shape does not serve the community well)
- 32nd Senate District in the Bronx (is totally gerrymandered)
- Bronx (is generally gerrymandered for Senate and Assembly districts).
- Chinatown (should not be divided in any district)
- Greenwich Village (concern to keep Greenwich Village, South Village, and Meat Packing together)
- Lower East Side is linked to Chinatown (is rightly connected to Sunset Park)
- Park Chester and East Chester in the Bronx (keep together)
- Pelham Parkway communities (not clear what neighborhoods, should be kept together)
- South Bronx and Upper Manhattan (should stay together in Congressional district)
- South Street Seaport (should be connected to Wall Street and Battery Park in all districts)
- Upper East Side (all the medical institutions of the UES should be kept together in a single Congressional district)
- Upper West Side (its Senate districts are chopped up into numerous districts)
- Upper West Side should be connected to Brooklyn Heights (because of Jewish populations)
- West side of Manhattan (keep entire West side together from UWS to Battery Park, Separate from East Side) (one concern was to include Morningside Heights)
- Van Nest in the Bronx (has always been considered part of the East side of Bronx but split into 2 assembly districts, Senate districts also split it)

Access the specific recording for the **Manhattan/Bronx** hearing [here](#).

Brooklyn/Staten Island Key Takeaways: The vast majority of witnesses at this two-borough session were from Brooklyn. The relatively few voices from Staten Island stated concerns for districts that rectify the division of North Shore communities that split POC voting power in Assembly and Senate districts. There were several recurring themes that were voiced in Brooklyn. A few were voiced in the context of keeping an incumbent in office, e.g. keeping the district that pairs Staten Island and a few select communities of Southern Brooklyn together, as well as Congressional Districts 8, 9, and 10. But a greater number of voices asked for (1) most prominently, calls for Senate and Assembly districts that unite the growing Asian communities of Sunset Park-Bensonhurst-Homecrest-Sheepshead Bay (these speakers also frequently noted

the natural tie to Manhattan's Chinatown and the desire to keep that Congressional district as it is); Jewish communities asking to keep the 10th Congressional District that is gerrymandered to tie together the Upper West Side of Manhattan to Borough Park section to form a "the most Jewish congressional district in the United States"; (3) voices from current Congressional District 9 centering Crown Heights asking that it stay mostly as it is now centering the Afro-Caribbean community; and (4) many in Bay Ridge's Muslim community asking that it no longer be divided up among various districts, which has diluted its voting power and representation.

Organizations Named:

- AALDEF / Unity Maps Coalition
- APA Voice
- Arab American Association of Bay Ridge
- Borough Park Jewish Community Council
- Center for Law & Justice at Medgar Evers College/Unity Maps Coalition
- Draw Democracy NYC
- Dyker Heights Community Civic Association
- El Puente de Williamsburg
- EmGage NY Metro
- Jewish Community Alliance
- Latino Justice/PERLDEF
- Make the Road NY
- Muslim Sisters of Staten Island
- NAACP Brooklyn
- NAACP Staten Island
- New York Immigration Coalition / Mapping Our Future
- New York Jewish Agenda
- New Yorkers for Fair Districts
- United Jewish Associations
- Yalla Brooklyn
- Yemeni Americans Merchants Assoc.

Communities of Concern:

- 20th Senate District (gerrymandered)
- 23rd Senate District (gerrymandered/splits Latino neighborhoods)
- 25th Senate District (gerrymandered)
- 8th & 9th Congressional Districts (keep as is)
- 8th Congressional District (is gerrymandered and picks up parts of South Brooklyn it should not)
- Arlington & Port Ivory on Staten Island (should be kept together)

- Bay Ridge (should have its own Senate district, Arab communities are split into multiple Assembly districts)
- Bed-Stuy/Crown Heights/Williamsburg (should be drawn together to create a Yiddishspeaking Community of Interest)
- Bed-Stuy/Crown Heights (is a majority Black neighborhood, and district lines should reflect that)
- Borough Park (should stay connected to UWS in 10th Congressional District)
- Borough Park (should NOT stay connected to UWS in 10th Congressional District, gerrymandered)
- Borough Park (split into several Senate districts)
- Brighton Beach & Sheepshead Bay (Russian populations are split across Assembly Districts, should be kept whole)
- Brownsville (divided, should be kept whole in districts, its hospital is in a separate district)
- Coney Island and Brighton Beach (share more in common with South Brooklyn and Staten Island than Bed-Stuy)
- Crown Heights (is the center of the Caribbean community and should be the center of majority Black districts)
- Dyker Heights and Bay Ridge (would be better served if put into one or two districts)
- Flatbush (its Jewish population is a community of interest, and should be paired with Russian populations nearby)
- Flatbush (is a Caribbean neighborhood and should be paired with other Black Communities of Interest)
- North Shore of Staten Island (split into 2 Assembly districts and disenfranchised)
- Ocean Hill & Brownsville (should be drawn together into districts)
- Southwest Brooklyn (should stay connected to Staten Island for congressional district)
- Southwest Brooklyn (should NOT stay connected to Staten Island for congressional district)
- Sunset Park (is split up in many state districts, keep whole)
- Sunset Park (Asian populations should be drawn together with those of Bensonhurst, Homecrest, and Sheepshead Bay for senate district)
- Sunset Park (should be kept together with Chinatown for the congressional district)
- Williamsburg & Bushwick (in North Brooklyn should be grouped with Ridgewood, Queens)

Access the specific recording for the **Brooklyn/Staten Island** hearing [here](#).

Mid-Hudson Valley/Capital District Key Takeaways: There were very few voices from the Capital District. The vast majority were from “Mid-Hudson Valley”. Those few in Capital District emphasized their desire to keep counties above and near Albany grouped together and not part of a North Country Congressional district. In Mid-Hudson, the largest number of voices were for creating districts that better represent the interests of Ramapo, which is currently split across several Assembly districts. There were several voices from Northern Westchester saying their interests are very different from that of Southern Westchester. And in Southern Westchester, several speakers were for keeping certain communities grouped together in districts, such as the villages within the town of Greenburgh (Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Elmsford, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington, and Tarrytown); Pelham Manor & Mount Vernon; and White Plains-Scarsdale- Ardsley-Hartsdale-Edgemont. Several also said Orange County should be kept whole (and separate from Westchester).

Organizations Named:

- American Latino Coalition
- Delta Sigma Theta
- JCC Rockland
- League of Women Voters Saratoga Co.
- League of Women Voters Westchester
- Make the Road NY

Communities of Concern Named:

- Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Montgomery counties (should stay together in a single Congressional district)
- Capital Region- Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, etc. (should be kept together; common interests and economic ties)
- Greenburgh (town of), Westchester Co. (its 7 villages are split up and should be drawn together)
- Hastings-on-Hudson, Westchester Co. (the river towns all have similar interests, leave districts as they are)
- Orange county (should be its own unified district)
- Ossining (does not belong in the district it is grouped with across the river)
- Ossining (split into multiple Assembly districts)
- Mount Kisco (keep Congressional district as is)
- New Castle, Westchester Co (has been split apart)
- Peaksville (should be kept as one district)
- Pelham/Pelham Manor (should not be grouped with NYC districts; concerns over gerrymandering)
- Putnam County (is split for partisan advantage)
- Ramapo (concerns over Ramapo being divided; should be one district)

- Ramapo, Rockland County (the Orthodox communities centered around here are split into numerous districts)
- Saratoga County (has a population of a level of 1.5 assembly districts, please divide no more than once, rather than the 4 districts it is. Most folks in the area are oriented toward Capital District rather than North Country)
- Scarsdale (should be kept whole in all districts; should be with Westchester and not NYC)
- Stony Point in Orange County (should not be grouped with Westchester)
- Ulster County (concerns about divisions in Ulster County; split into multiple Senate and Assembly districts)
- Ulster County (is rural has more in common with NYC-city/suburb region than rural upstate)
- Washington County (its 17 towns split across many districts. For Congressional districts, should be grouped with Warren, Rensselaer counties rather than the North Country regions).
- Westchester County (its large prison populations should NOT be counted in its districts)
- Westchester County (North part of the county very different from South part, North part should be grouped with Putnam County)
- White Plains & New Rochelle (should be drawn together)
- White Plains, Scarsdale, Ardsley, Hartsdale, Edgemont etc. (are one community but divided across congressional districts)

Access the specific recording for the **Mid-Hudson Valley/Capital District** hearing [here](#).

North Country / Mohawk Valley Key Takeaways: Only three people testified at this hearing. There were no concrete themes. The main takeaways were to keep towns whole, to not cut slivers of counties out to be put into other districts, and to not group Mohawk Valley with areas to the West.

Organizations Named:

- None

Communities of Concern:

- Herkimer County (is split apart)
- Westville (should be kept together)

Access the specific recording for the **North Country / Mohawk Valley** hearing [here](#).

Southern Tier / Central NY Key Takeaways: This hearing had fewer speakers, but very strong support for preserving an all-rural district (the current 23rd) in its current basic configuration and NOT being tied to any cities (Ithaca, the largest city in the current district, has a population of about 30,000). There were also several voices saying that the counties linking Ithaca and Binghamton (Tompkins, Tioga, Courtland, and Broome) have a lot in common with a lot of commuters back and forth, and therefore should be grouped together, not with Western NY counties.

Organizations Named:

- Community Foundation of Elmira Corning and the Finger Lakes
- Corning Community College
- Three Rivers Development Corp.

Communities of Concern:

- 23rd Congressional District (Please preserve majority-rural composition, do not group with cities)
- Ithaca (Cornell University is split across districts)
- Corning (Keep in a majority rural district, not grouped with any city)
- Corning (The 3 counties surrounding it (Steuben, Chemung & Schuyler Counties) should not be separated)
- Jamestown (Keep in a majority rural district, not grouped with any city)
- Madison County (keep its districts as they are)
- Syracuse (Syracuse University is split across districts)
- Tioga County, Owego, Village (do not split, linked to the Susquehanna Valley, Binghamton, and Ithaca)
- Tompkins County (Ithaca area cracked into multiple districts, keep intact.
Tompkins Co (has most in common with Courtland County, so should be linked)
- Tompkins (Ithaca), Tioga, Courtland, and Broome (Binghamton) Counties form a community of interest (academic, tourism, economic interests)

Access the specific recording for the **Southern Tier / Central NY** hearing [here](#).

Finger Lakes & Western NY Key Takeaways: Among those living in Chautauqua County, there is a clear split between those who think the three most Southwestern NY counties should be grouped with only rural counties to the East or in an all-Western district that might include urban

areas of Erie County. Rochester appears to be commonplace for unfair Assembly and Senate district maps, not just the city itself, but the counties surrounding it also have many complaints about how they are grouped in illogical ways in various directions.

Organizations Named:

- Access of Western New York
- Delta Sigma Theta Rochester
- NYIC / Mapping Our Future
- League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara
- League of Women Voters Rochester
- League of Women Voters Tomkins County
- Push Buffalo

Communities of Concern Named:

- 56th Senate District (is gerrymandered to disempower BIPOC communities of Rochester)
- 138th Assembly District (is gerrymandered with a “lemur tail” that wraps around Rochester and disenfranchises voters of the city)
- 26th Congressional District (keep as is, do not include any outer-ring suburbs or rural)
- Auburn & Oswego (should be paired together in districts)
- Buffalo & Niagara (constitutes a region that has many shared concerns)
- Chautauqua County (DO NOT link with Buffalo, link with only rural counties)
- Chautauqua County (DO place in a Western-NY centered district when drawn to standards of compactness and competitiveness, not a sprawling Southern Tier)
- Chautauqua County (should always be grouped with Cattaraugus & Allegany Counties in districts)
- Erie (districts should be retained as much as possible)
- Livingston County, (directly south of Monroe County, but gets put in districts that align with Erie County, should be linked to Rochester.
- Mount Morris, NY (should not be districted out of the Senate district)
- North Tonawanda (Should be grouped with Niagara County (which it is located in), not Erie County).
- Penfield & Webster outside Rochester (should be paired together)
- Rochester (is divided into multiple districts, specifically cracks BIPOC communities)
- Tompkins County (community of interest; little in common with Jamestown and Western Tier)
- Tonawanda (concerns over division; better to be associated with Niagra County)

- Williamson, NY in Wayne County (is part of Greater Rochester Area but put into the Congressional district of Syracuse)

Access the specific recording for the **Finger Lakes & Western NY** hearing [here](#).