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December 29 Roundtable Update

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NEW YORK REDISTRICTING ROUNDTABLE UPDATE

Members of the N.Y. State Independent Redistricting Commission released the following statements late last week about the Commission's work:

Statement from Independent Redistricting Commissioners Martins, Nesbitt, Stephens, Conway and Brady

"The New York State Independent Redistricting Commission has been working non-stop since early summer to adopt consensus reapportionment maps for presentation to the Legislature. Since the conclusion of state-wide public hearings in November, the members and staffs of the Commission have been working together toward developing consensus on district lines for Congress, NYS Senate and Assembly. On December 22nd, 2021, at 4pm the five Democratic appointed commissioners of the Commission, after working for weeks toward a consensus plan, have decided to move a partisan plan forward with a "take it or leave it attitude" and abandon the independence that this commission was founded upon. All the commissioners working together completed 90% of the maps. We had hoped to continue to move toward a consensus with our colleagues but see no to move forward at this point, other than to complete the consensus maps drawn by our independent line drawing consultants and negotiated by the commissioners, after completion, will move that plan for a vote on January 3rd."

**From the Chair of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
David Imamura, and Commissioners Eugene Bengler, Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina,
Dr. John Fleteau and Elaine Frazier.**

We strongly disagree with the statements made by our colleagues on the Commission. When New Yorkers voted to create this Commission in 2014, they tasked us with maps that appropriately take into account the vast diversity of communities of interest found throughout our State. As a result, we have been dedicated to incorporating public input into our work from the start and are grateful for the incredible participation of everyday New Yorkers in this process. Since July, the Commission has conducted 24 public hearings over 51 hours both in person and online. We have listened to testimony from over 630 speakers, and received over 2,100 written submissions, testimony, and maps with nearly 4,000 pages of public input from New Yorkers.

Following the final hearing on December 5th, we began deliberations to synthesize public comment and create new maps reflecting public input in preparation for negotiating a compromise. Committed to the bipartisan process, we then shared these

new maps with the other Commissioners but they did not reciprocate by sharing any new maps with us. Over several weeks, the entire Commission participated in bipartisan working groups across 16 meetings to discuss possible areas of agreement. These meetings produced what we considered to be productive discussions on possible compromise maps where all Commissioners could reach a consensus that best reflects the needs of New Yorkers. Subsequently, the Commission's bipartisan line-drawing team made changes with guidance from all Commissioners. Finally, we have proposed new maps that reflect both public input and compromises discussed during bipartisan working group sessions and vary significantly from our first draft "Letters" plan. The shift from our initial "Letters" draft both shows how impactful the testimony we received was, and our willingness to compromise with our colleagues.

We have reached out to our colleagues to share what we believe is a compromise that is in the best interest of New Yorkers and have invited them to engage in further dialogue. The choice is theirs. While we understand the value of consensus among the Commission our utmost priority remains producing fair maps that best represent the people of New York State, including best accounting for public input and communities of interest.