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## 5.26 NYC Districting Commission Hearing Summary

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**WE ARE NEW YORK'S LAW SCHOOL**

**The New York City Districting Commission 2022-23 Public Hearing  
May 26, 2022  
3-6pm at 1 Pace Plaza, New York, New York 10007**

Opening points on process:

- 2020 Census - 8.8 million residents in NYC
- 51 city council districts
- City Charter requires “one person, one vote”
- Ideal population per district: 173,000
- Charter allows for 5% deviation
  - Districts should be between 168,000 and 177,000
  - All districts are currently over or under this range
  - Charter allows for exceptions to the 5% deviation if there are particular concerns from the public regarding communities of interest or other criteria
  - Chair Walcott mentioned potentially a 10% deviation but indicated the legal department was still discussing this
- Next steps:
  - Iterative process
  - Monday, June 6 – LaGuardia Community College – approval of first draft plan
  - Then more public hearings to get feedback on the first draft
  - Then commission will work on a second draft
- Chair Walcott encouraged members of the public to hold their own meetings in their communities as well to get feedback and hear concerns
- Commission is conscious of the need to accommodate the public when it comes to deciding when and where these meetings are held
- Further meetings will be held throughout the boroughs
- Public can send written testimony by email to [PublicTestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov](mailto:PublicTestimony@redistricting.nyc.gov)

The Bronx		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Yahay Obeid	Bronx Muslim Center  Alliance of Yemeni American Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Yemen area – currently divided into district 13 and district 15 – make whole</li> <li>• Van Nest, Morris Park, Little Yemen, Bronx Park East, Allerton, and Pelham Gardens</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing community of 10-15,000 people – need to be in one district</li> </ul>
Bernadette Ferrara	<p>Community Board 11</p> <p>Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Van Nest</li> <li>• Currently located on the border of a district resulting in lack of funding from elected officials</li> <li>• Do not split</li> <li>• Area currently in 15 should be united with 13</li> <li>• Aligns more with Van Nest’s low density community concerns</li> <li>• Would also unify Yemeni Muslim community</li> <li>• Referenced attached maps</li> <li>• Van Nest, Morris Park, Pelham Parkway, Bronx Park East, and Allerton – should be made together</li> </ul>
Charlene Jackson Mendez	Van Nest Neighborhood Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Van Nest</li> <li>• Concerns regarding community board</li> <li>• Importance of community engagement</li> <li>• Need support from elected officials</li> <li>• Keep the two districts</li> <li>• Having two separate city council members represent the neighborhood allows for two pools of appointees to community board – leads to more inclusivity and diversity</li> <li>• Also allows for Van Nest community to benefit from expertise from one city council member who is an expert in finance and one who is an attorney and housing expert</li> <li>• Also provides more funding for neighborhood</li> </ul>

Brooklyn		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Yiaten Chu	Asian Wave Alliance (founder, president)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Asian communities whole</li> <li>• Important to consider which neighborhoods will be grouped with these communities to ensure values and issues are represented</li> <li>• Asian population is fastest growing in NYC</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinatown becoming gentrified, while Asian communities in Queens and Brooklyn are expanding</li> <li>• Recent concerns             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempted to change admission criteria for specialized high schools – negatively impacted Asians – (DeBlasio characterized Asians as a “privileged class”)</li> <li>• plan to close Rikers and create borough-based jails – enraged Asian residents in Chinatown and Kew Gardens</li> <li>• homeless shelters placed in Asian neighborhoods</li> <li>• Surging Asian hate crimes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Communities of concern:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brooklyn Bensonhurst – 65<sup>th</sup> St. / 18<sup>th</sup> Ave. to Bay Parkway</li> <li>• W. 6<sup>th</sup> and Kings Highway, Bath avenue and Stillwell, Benson Ave. to 18<sup>th</sup> avenue</li> <li>• Bensonhurst currently divided into 4 districts</li> <li>• keep these Asian communities whole</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Ekram Akrowmeim	<p>Academy of Medical and Public Health Services</p> <p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Sunset Park whole with Bensonhurst</li> <li>• Make Sunset Park whole in district 38 (currently divided among 4 districts)</li> <li>• More in common with Bensonhurst than Red Hook</li> </ul>
Wah Lee	<p>OCA-NY (advisory board member) (Organization for Chinese Americans)</p> <p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bensonhurst (currently broken into 4 districts - 43, 47, 44, 38) – make whole</li> <li>• keep APA communities whole</li> <li>• Asian population growth in Brooklyn</li> <li>• Emphasized recent hate crimes and need for representation</li> </ul>

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Lori Huang	United Chinese Association Brooklyn  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bensonhurst – most divided of APA communities (4 districts)</li> <li>• Should be unified</li> <li>• Emphasized growth of Asian populations - lines should reflect this</li> <li>• Keep Asian communities of interest whole</li> <li>• Support AALDEF maps, specifically for Bensonhurst, Sunset Park</li> </ul>
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<b>Manhattan</b>		
<b>Witness Name</b>	<b>Organization(s)</b>	<b>Testimony</b>
Ashley Chen	Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) (policy fellow)  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep AAPI communities together</li> <li>• Emphasized need for accessibility (language, physical) and transparency (collaboration with public and accountability) in this process</li> <li>• Keep communities of interest whole</li> <li>• Required to keep ethnic, racial, and language minority groups intact (federal Voting Rights Act and NYC Charter)</li> <li>• Avoid racial and partisan gerrymandering</li> <li>• Seek public input</li> <li>• AAPI population is fastest growing in the city</li> <li>• LES/Chinatown</li> <li>• Sunset Park in Brooklyn</li> <li>• Flushing Queens</li> </ul>
Mae Lee	Chinese Progressive Association (executive director)  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LES/Chinatown is a community of interest</li> <li>• Diverse community</li> <li>• Asian, Latino, Black, and many others</li> <li>• Tied by socioeconomic commonalities and common interests (affordable housing, healthcare, public safety)</li> <li>• Keep LES/Chinatown whole</li> </ul>
Shari Weiner	Community Board 8 Manhattan – voting reform taskforce (co-chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District 4, 5</li> <li>• Both 4 and 5 will have to shed population</li> <li>• Reviewing criteria and will have more recommendations later</li> <li>• Following up on letter CB8 sent to chairman regarding lack of female participation on commission</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City’s population 53% female, only 26% of commissioners are female</li> <li>• Staff hiring should take into account gender - hire most qualified people but need female perspective</li> </ul>
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Queens		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Jagpreet Singh	Desis Rising Up and Moving  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping communities of interest together</li> <li>• Don’t pack them into districts where they lose voting power</li> </ul> <p>Queens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladeshi, Indo-Caribbean communities in Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park – currently divided, make whole</li> <li>• Indian and Bangladeshi communities in Hillside corridor                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Jamaica portion of Hillside corridor to Glen Oaks portion of Hillside corridor – communities have revitalized area and share a cultural hub</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Western Queens – communities of interest in Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Woodside                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These communities of interest share a lot of ideals, religious institutions, food diversity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Bronx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladeshi community in Parkchester - keep whole</li> </ul> <p>Brooklyn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bangladeshi community in Kensington area around Church and McDonald – keep whole</li> </ul>
Linette Townsley		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southeast Queens area</li> <li>• Important to keep cultural communities together</li> <li>• Downtown Jamaica Ave., 165<sup>th</sup> down to Van Wyck</li> <li>• Redraw to include Sutphin Blvd down to Van Wyck where Jamaica Ave. corridor is</li> <li>• Budgetary issues with Far Rockaway</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion to unify all of Rockaways and separate from SE Queens</li> <li>• Emphasized development on Jamaica Ave. and importance of this process as the lines are for 10 years and they might be currently antiquated</li> </ul>
Phil Wong	<p>Elmhurst United (founder)</p> <p>Chinese American Citizens Alliance Greater NY (President)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District 30 - Elmhurst, Maspeth, Middle Village, Woodside, Glendale, Ridgewood</li> <li>• Population decreased by 1,604</li> <li>• District 25 (his district) population increased by 2,559</li> <li>• Small portion south of Forest Park was drawn in 10 years ago to be part of district 30             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This piece is very different from the rest of 30 – more in line with 32 or 37</li> </ul> </li> <li>• He lives in triangular area of Grand Ave. / Simonson St. / and Queens Blvd.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily single family or 2-3 family homes</li> <li>• should be part of district 30 – matches character of that district more than district 25</li> <li>• this part of 25 is very different from the rest of 25</li> <li>• city council office does not understand their problems as they are dealing with more large condo buildings, coops, etc.</li> <li>• move that area back to district 30</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Sally Wong	Elmhurst United	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move section of Elmhurst to district 30</li> <li>• Southside of Queen’s Blvd. to Grand Ave.</li> <li>• Zoning and housing type more like district 30</li> <li>• character of the neighborhood – 2-3 family homes</li> <li>• While rest of district has changed to larger apartment buildings</li> <li>• More like Maspeth</li> <li>• Make Elmhurst and Maspeth together in district 30</li> </ul>
John Bahia	Woodside on the Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Woodside and Elmhurst’s Filipino populations whole</li> </ul>

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	Youth on the Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roosevelt Ave. in Woodside and Queens Blvd. Elmhurst hold many Filipino small businesses</li> <li>• Little Manila - 63<sup>rd</sup> St. along Roosevelt Ave. in Woodside</li> <li>• Keep Woodside and Elmhurst whole</li> </ul>
Victoria Leahy	<p>Woodside on the Move (Chief of Staff)</p> <p>APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Filipino community and Little Manila whole in Woodside</li> <li>• 63<sup>rd</sup> St. to 71st St.</li> <li>• Filipino community has expanded across Woodside into Elmhurst</li> <li>• Referenced AALDEF neighborhood maps for detailed map of Filipino neighborhoods in Woodside, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights</li> <li>• Additionally, other Asian ethnic groups throughout Elmhurst, Woodside, and Jackson Heights</li> <li>• Keep these Asian communities of interests whole</li> </ul>
Paul Graziano	Queens Civic Congress (urban planner) represents over 80 civic organizations and HOAs in Queens County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He will submit a document with maps of borough based on interests of organizations that Queens Civic Congress represents (including Elmhurst United)</li> <li>• Noted that the majority of Queen's districts are below minimum threshold – only two districts above maximum threshold (26, 28)</li> <li>• Emphasized the need to keep neighborhoods together while also looking at common zoning, common boundaries, and hard boundaries</li> <li>• Most districts are about where they should be</li> <li>• Prefers incremental rather than wholesale changes</li> </ul>
Howard Moskowitz	Elmhurst United	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is located in Elmhurst (district 25) – south side of Queens Blvd. bordering Maspeth section of district 30</li> <li>• 1-3 family homes - closely resembles homes in Maspeth</li> <li>• Many students in his area are zoned to go to schools in Maspeth</li> <li>• Common issues as homeowners with Maspeth</li> </ul>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South side of Queens Blvd. to Grand Ave. to LIRR - Combine with Maspeth (district 30)</li> </ul>
Robbie Sayid?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasized focusing on languages and cultures and not dividing up communities</li> <li>• district 24 Jamaica Queens area – keep whole South Asian and other minority communities</li> </ul>
Milly Wong	Elmhurst United	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elmhurst south side of Queens Blvd.</li> <li>• Predominantly working-class homeowners</li> <li>• Private 2-3 family homes</li> <li>• Quieter area compared to north side of Queens Blvd.</li> <li>• Should combine Maspeth with south side of Queens Blvd. to Grand Ave.</li> <li>• Most people don't cross Queens Blvd. because it's a dangerous intersection</li> <li>• North side is very different – larger apartment buildings, different character</li> <li>• Need better representation</li> </ul>
Liz OuYang	APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce (Coordinator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asian population growth in Queens and Brooklyn</li> <li>• Keep Asian communities whole</li> <li>• Aside from Bronx, in each borough Asian population was fastest growing racial group</li> <li>• Most growth was in Queens and Brooklyn</li> <li>• Referenced AALDEF maps</li> </ul>
John Schaffer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elmhurst 2-3 family homes</li> <li>• Combine with Maspeth</li> <li>• Elmhurst is more aligned with district 30</li> <li>• Utilize Juniper Park, stores, doctors, etc. all in Maspeth</li> </ul>
Kevin Cho	Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep AAPI communities together</li> <li>• Flushing and Bayside should be combined – currently in 19 and 20</li> <li>• Growing AAPI population in this area</li> </ul>
Shivana Jorawar	Jahajee Sisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indo-Caribbean communities</li> <li>• Asian American communities</li> <li>• Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, and Ozone Park – keep together</li> <li>• Keep Little Guyana together</li> <li>• Advocates should not have to make demands of three different city council offices</li> </ul>

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Mark Laster	Central Queens Redistricting Coalition  Forest Hills Green Team  Queens Community Board 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rego Park and Forest Hills</li> <li>• Very divided among state level representation</li> <li>• Keep whole at city level</li> <li>• Try not to divide communities of interest</li> </ul>
Paul Trust		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unify Richmond Hills and South Ozone Park</li> <li>• Currently it's a "Cracked community"</li> <li>• Emphasized need to prevent voter suppression and to keep Asian American communities of interest together</li> <li>• Referenced AALDEF recommended maps</li> </ul>
Albert Baldeo		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park, Ozone Park - Little Guyana</li> <li>• From Van Wyck Expressway to Cross Bay Blvd., Hillside Ave. to Conduit – should be one district</li> <li>• Keep Little Bangladesh and Little Punjab whole in Hillside</li> <li>• Concerned about gerrymandering, voter suppression, and dilution</li> <li>• He submitted maps</li> </ul>
Mohamed Q. Amin	Caribbean Equality Project (founder, executive director)  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park - Little Guyana</li> <li>• AAPI – fastest growing population in NYC</li> <li>• Keep Asian communities together</li> <li>• South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities</li> <li>• Currently divided - 28, 29, 32</li> </ul>
Linda Lam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elmhurst</li> <li>• 58<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Seabury St. - South side of Queens Blvd.</li> <li>• Currently in district 25, should be in district 30</li> <li>• 2-3 fam homes – more closely aligned with district 30</li> </ul>
Sandra Choi	MinKwon Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asian communities in Flushing – keep communities whole</li> </ul>

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	APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support AALDEF maps</li> <li>• “Koreatown” is divided, should be whole</li> </ul>
Raj Korpan	Central Queens Redistricting Coalition (co-chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rego Park</li> <li>• District should represent community</li> <li>• Central Queens is distinct community different from surrounding areas</li> <li>• Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens – maintain in district 29</li> <li>• Large Jewish and Asian population</li> <li>• District should include all of these communities</li> <li>• district 29 is nearly ideal for representing Central Queens</li> <li>• However, part of Richmond Hill that’s in district 29 would be better suited to join with South Ozone Park</li> <li>• Then would need to expand district</li> <li>• Expand district 29 north to Elmhurst but don’t expand west into Middle Village or cross over Flushing Meadows Park</li> </ul>
Amanda Deebrah	South Queens Women’s March  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park whole as shown in the AALDEF Communities of Interest map</li> <li>• Asian-American population, South Asian, Punjabi, Indo-Caribbean</li> <li>• Census data does not fully account for these populations</li> <li>• Currently divided among 3 districts - 28, 29, 32</li> <li>• Emphasized growth of Asian population</li> <li>• Keep Asian communities of interest whole</li> </ul>
Arianne-Ron Maliwanag	NY State Secretary for the National Federation of Filipino American Associations  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Manila in Woodside and Elmhurst</li> <li>• Highest concentration of Filipino small businesses in NY are in Woodside and Elmhurst</li> <li>• Devastated by COVID-19 and recent anti-Asian hate crimes</li> <li>• Keep Little Manila, Woodside, and Elmhurst whole</li> <li>• Keep Filipino community whole</li> </ul>

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<p>Heather Beers-Dimitriadis</p>	<p>Central Queens Redistricting Coalition (co-chair)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rego Park – district 29</li> <li>• This district is pretty good</li> <li>• Keep neighborhoods whole</li> <li>• Remove small piece of Richmond Hill from district 29 so they have a single city council representative</li> <li>• Will need to add population so move northwest into Elmhurst on north side of Queens Blvd.</li> <li>• Don't move into Middle Village (different character)</li> <li>• Don't break the current grouping of Rego Park, Forest Hills, and Kew Gardens</li> </ul>
<p>Israel Peskowitz</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jewish Community of Central Queens</li> <li>• Kew Gardens Hills – district 24</li> <li>• district 24 should remain the same as it is contiguous, compact, and includes communities of interest – compared to oddly-shaped new Assembly/Senate districts</li> <li>• Kew Garden Hills, Pomonok, Electchester, Hillcrest – keep together</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Staten Island</b></p>		
<p><b>Witness Name</b></p>	<p><b>Organization(s)</b></p>	<p><b>Testimony</b></p>
<p>Neil Barry</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staten Island</li> <li>• Concern re racial gerrymandering</li> </ul>
<p>Edward Josie</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Black community in Staten Island</li> <li>• Needs representation</li> <li>• Staten Island should not secede from NYC</li> </ul>
<p>Jasmine Robinson</p>	<p>Female district leader of 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District</p> <p>Alliance of South Asian Labor</p> <p>National Council of Negro Women (Staten Island)</p> <p>Staten Island Political Action Club</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• district 49</li> <li>• North shore of Staten Island</li> <li>• Need for more outreach to Staten Island residents</li> <li>• Don't divide district 49</li> <li>• Large immigrant community</li> <li>• Keep diverse voices of north shore together</li> </ul>

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Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Ben Weinberg	Citizens Union (director of public policy)	<p>Emphasized need to harbor public confidence and trust in this process especially after what happened at state level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency and public participation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make all materials public – agenda, minutes, transcripts, resolutions, etc.</li> <li>• schedule meetings in the evening or on weekends</li> <li>• translations and accessibility</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fair and independent redistricting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopt expansive anti-gerrymandering criteria</li> <li>• adopt a code of ethics to address political conflicts of interest</li> <li>• preclearance report to explain reasons for drawing lines the way they were drawn</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Lurie Daniel Favors	Center for Law and Social Justice (attorney and executive director)  Unity Map Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasized need for equitable political power in Black communities</li> <li>• Looking at Voting Rights Act</li> <li>• Look at communities of interest</li> <li>• Look at actual population data for Black populations</li> <li>• Racial data is not always enough to correctly draw lines that do not split communities – communities are diverse</li> <li>• Increase accessibility for hearings (locations, times)</li> </ul>
Jerry Vattamala	Director of democracy program at  AALDEF  Unity map Coalition  APA Voice Redistricting Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitting 16 Asian American communities of interest maps</li> <li>• Keep these communities whole as much as possible</li> <li>• Superimpose these boundaries over any map to check that communities are being kept whole</li> <li>• Race was just one of many factors considered when drawing these boundaries</li> <li>• New maps should reflect large growth in Asian populations</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasized that Asian Americans are a protected group under Voting Rights Act and under NYC Charter</li><li>• Required to follow criteria:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Population Equality</li><li>2. Then protections and fair and effective representations for racial and language minority groups protected under Voting Rights Act</li></ol></li><li>• Then other factors may be considered</li></ul>
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