

2022

8.18.22 - NYC Districting - Staten Island Public Hearing

Piper Benedict



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The New York City Districting Commission 2022-23 Public Hearing

Thursday August 18, 2022 @ 5:30pm to 9pm

Staten Island Borough Hall, 10 Richmond Terrace Rm 125

Brooklyn		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Danielle Mowry?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay Ridge = very cohesive neighborhood • Area is divided in ways that don't make sense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined by highways • Bay Ridge stretches to where BQE entrance is and where 3rd Ave. curves down and goes into Sunset Park • Then 86th St. stretches into Dyker Heights • A lot of families move from Bay Ridge to Dyker Heights – very community based • Neighborhood is chopped from 3rd Ave. below and parts of 5th Ave. and 6th Ave. are cut off – doesn't make sense • Not going into Sunset Park because that involves crossing highways • But do go further into Dyker Heights or further into Bay Ridge or going up to 6th Ave. or down to 2nd Ave. or Rich Ave. • Will include written testimony with maps • Arab Americans – dividing neighborhood diffuses Arab American voice in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights • Don't splinter Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights into 3-4 districts
Reem Jaafar	Bay Ridge Democrats (president)	<p>District 43</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay Ridge • She would be mapped into 38 • Diverse community • Arab community benefited from being part of diverse community and being geographically close • Noted the Muslim Ban during Trump presidency and how council member helped

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		<p>during that time – important to stay in one district</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights as one entity • Also same community board - 10 • Keep all of Bay Ridge from Shore Rd. in the west of 65th St. in the north, to 7th Ave. on the east, to Belt Parkway in the south all wholly contained in the same district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would also add Towers of Bay Ridge • Match up with community board boundaries, 68th precinct
Rodrigo Camarena		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Sunset Park intact – historically underrepresented • Ensure this majority minority community retain power in city council • Keep Red Hook and Sunset Park united <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working class, immigrant communities • Shared waterfront • Shared history dealing with climate crisis and underinvestment • Including neighboring communities will further dilute voice for advocating for needs
Kate Cucko?		<p>District 43</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resides on border of Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights • Maintain historic communities of interest and preserve and support ethnic and religious enclaves in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights • Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights overlap with existing city boundaries – schools, sanitation, etc. • Keep these communities together in the same district
Council Member Alexa Avilés	New York City Council – District 38	<p>District 38</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Hook, Sunset Park, Greenwood Heights, portions of Windsor Terrace, Dyker Heights, and Borough Park • Opposed to draft map • Current district 38 was created in 1989 to ensure that a Latino plurality could elect candidate of choice

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Arabic speaking community and Asian community • Sunset Park is majority people of color community • There is unity in the diversity • Proposed plan takes sledgehammer to district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepladders through heart of Sunset Park community • In nonsensical way - 3 blocks down 4th Ave., 8 blocks down 5th Ave., 7 blocks down 6th Ave., 7 blocks down 7th Ave. • Removes important Catholic Church • Breaks up business improvement district • Lose cohesiveness • Also removes Red Hook from Sunset Park – they share long history • Putting Red Hook with 39 puts them in majority white district • violates VRA • breaks up communities of interest • Supports Unity Map • Supports new Asian district in Unity Map
Courtney Scott		<p>District 43</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bay Ridge and Sunset Park are harmonious neighbors – but don't break up present council districts • Maintain consistent communities of interest • Would undermine their voice • Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights share many city agencies • Supports Unity Map

Manhattan		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Jennifer Ratner	Friends of the East River Esplanade 60 th to 120 th Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservancy for waterfront park in Manhattan • Advocate for linear park that is historically continuous

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a mile of the park would move from Manhattan (CD 5) into Queen’s district (CD 26) • Need representation from a local politician on Manhattan side of river • Have worked hard with council members to improve park
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Queens		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Fay Hill	District Leader – 31b	<p>District 31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only change is to include all of JFK airport in district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was previously part of 31 - would correct error from last cycle • Rosedale, Brookville, Laurelton, Springfield Gardens, Far Rockaway are directly in flight path • Currently represented by one congressional member, one state senator, one assemblymember • No need to have two separate council members for JFK • Rest of 31 should remain intact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and common characteristics • Common issues and interests – flooding, airport noise, education

Staten Island		
Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
Paul Casali	Budget and Legislative Director for Council Member Kamillah Hanks	<p>District 49</p> <p>Testimony on behalf of Council Member Hanks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Staten Island whole • Pleased that draft map reflects this • Strongly disagrees that this violates “one person, one vote,” or state or city law • Proposed map follows criteria in city charter and state law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All districts are within the 5% variance

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Staten Island districts keep districts compact • no cross-borough districts • preserves neighborhoods and communities of common interest • does not diminish representation of Staten Island voters • Map achieves commission’s nonpartisan goals to draw fair maps that keep communities of interest intact
Stephanie Shavuo		<p><u>District 49</u> Testimony on behalf of former Council Member Debi Rose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted history of redlining on Staten Island resulting in north shore being most densely populated, highest concentration of Blacks and Hispanics • Asian and Black populations - fastest growing on Staten Island • Twice as many Hispanics living on north shore • North shore = 32% Hispanic, 23% Black, 11% Asian • Most racially and ethnically diverse district • Charter – must ensure the fair and effective representation of racial and language minority groups protected by VRA • Keep neighborhoods and communities intact • North shore = rent burdened, food and transportation deserts, underperforming schools • Need to be able to raise their voices in concert to representatives that understand their needs – would not work if expanded into Brooklyn or Manhattan • Don’t expand into Brooklyn or Manhattan
Ed Josey	Staten Island branch of the NAACP (president)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Staten Island three districts (49, 50, 51) intact as they are, not crossing over with Brooklyn or Manhattan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial District = Well off financially • Nothing in common with north shore

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same with Brooklyn, nothing in common with north shore of Staten Island • Maybe impose 5% project and go forth with keeping Staten Island intact
Reverend Terry Troia	Staten Island Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (Chair)	<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In favor of preliminary map for 49 • Use 5% rule to keep north shore intact as one district • Charter – must maintain a cohesive representation of Black, Brown, Asian, other nonwhite communities • Only majority minority district on Staten Island • Splitting district and aligning with lower Manhattan or Brooklyn or 50th district (mid-island) would erode leadership and representation of minority communities and reduce resources • Only environmental justice district on Staten Island • Need tremendous services and resources in 49
Andrew Fairley		<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North shore area is suffering • Food insecurity, healthcare, childcare, education • Unique socio-economic factors affecting Staten Island • Won't get needed attention if changed • Keep district the way it is
Theresa Thanjan?	New York Immigration Coalition	<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep 49 intact • Urged commission to take proactive role to engage with community organizations and ethnic media across the city
Tatiana Arguello	Staten Island Not For Profit Association	<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep 49 entirely on Staten Island • In favor of draft map • Noted 2020 census being disrupted and not getting accurate count on north shore • Diverse district with lots of needs

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Staten Island whole – unique needs from rest of city
Esmeralda Tolbert	El Centro del Inmigrante	<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staten Island has particular characteristics, face different problems • Need to keep 49 together • Need access to job programs, health access, food programs
Maria Ramos		<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino community on north shore • Want community to have access to resources
Frank Morano		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of initial draft • Staten Island often gets short end of the stick historically • Almost no voice due to population • Shouldn't have to pay toll to visit representative • If merged with other borough would be an injustice for Staten Island as well as other borough
Roy Moskowitz		<p>District 50 (mid island district)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft still leaves New Springville, Hartland Village, and mall area out of 50 (mid island neighborhood) • And keeps it in south shore 51 • Largest Jewish population • Will include map with testimony • All mid island neighborhoods should be united
Karen Contreras		<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't divide district
Kathleen Rivera		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep in mind that population will increase in coming years • Will have so many more constituents by 2030 • Also don't combine with district 50 – different concerns • Hope proposed maps stay
Reverend Antoinette Donegan		<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most densely populated part of Staten Island

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many are rent burdened or on edge of homelessness, suffering from great inequalities • Largest Liberian and West African community • Growing Hispanic and Asian population • No public hospital • Unique challenges • Need to protect rights of historically marginalized communities • Keep 49 whole
Helen Settles	<p>Civic Engagement Chair of Staten Island Branch of the NAACP</p> <p>Board member of Project Hospitality</p> <p>Universal Temple of the Arts</p> <p>Staten Island Special Olympics</p>	<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRA 1965 - Redrawing 49 would be in violation • City charter – requires districts maintain cohesive representation of Black, Brown, Asian, and other nonwhite communities • Don't split north shore and combine with lower Manhattan, Brooklyn, or mid island • Leadership power would be diminished • Less resources for impoverished communities • Need full attention of council member • Majority minority community that has historically been excluded from resources
Anelle Villanueva Translated from Spanish		<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resident of north shore of Staten Island • Latina • Part of 63% of the population of people of color • The majority of people of north shore – need to stay together • All of the north shore should not be divided • If it gets divided, the district would lose voting power of people of color • Could violate VRA • Do not divide district 49
Mary Bullock		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small businesses in Port Richmond • White and black middle class • Many legacy businesses • Keep all three districts exclusively on the island

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Robert Perkins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to voices that really care from all boroughs • “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”
Abou Sy Diakhate	Staten Island Immigrant Council	<p>District 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep draft for north shore council district • Don’t want to be divided • Splitting between Staten Island and Brooklyn or Manhattan would have negative impact • Staten Island is a unique borough • Different needs and issues • Especially need affordable housing • Would take away resources and take time away from representative
Reverend Valerie Grant-Martin	Holy Fellowship Ministry in West Brighton Project Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key word – “uniqueness” • Small but united • Keep Staten Island as it is • Focus more on the needs
Andrés García	El Centro del Inmigrante (executive director)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of the power of voice • Need for access to medical services on the island in particular the north shore • Support for proposed map that retains Staten Island as Staten Island and does not divide voice between different boroughs • Don’t change anything – draft allows voices to be heard
Benedict Snyder		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave draft as it is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragments the strength that immigrant community has for fighting for rights • Would disadvantage community economically if combining with district that is as powerful as Manhattan – wouldn’t have ability to compete

Witness Name	Organization(s)	Testimony
William Stanford Jr.		<p>Staten Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put district 50 inside 49, rename 51 50 <p>Queens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Ozone Park and Richmond Hill together

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep communities together• Keep Rockaway Park to Far Rockaway together <p>August 22 public hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start earlier or change the date because election day on 23rd• Let him know if other people are ahead of him when testifying so he knows
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