

2022

## 8.18.22 - NYC Districting - Staten Island Public Hearing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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