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May 22 Roundtable Update

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NEW YORK REDISTRICTING ROUNDTABLE UPDATE

REDISTRICTING

APA Voices Sends Redistricting Commission FOIA Request on Queens Assembly District

Following a request by APA Voices to meet with the state Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) concerning the mapping of Queens Assembly districts in Richmond Hill-Ozone Park, the IRC co-chairs declined to meet, explaining that the Assembly mapping has been completed. In response last week, APA Voices and other affiliated organizations sent a freedom of information request to the IRC requesting documents relating to the commission's decision-making process in districts 24 and 26 (in the Richmond Hill-Ozone Park area). The coalition is looking into why the IRC changed its December map in Richmond Hill-Ozone Park for the map similar to those included in the Assembly-enacted 2022 map. The FOIA request asks the IRC for all records and communications created or received by the IRC that impacted the IRC's deliberations to draw proposed AD 24 in its draft map. A copy of the APA Voices Coalition letter is attached.

LITIGATION

Guzman et al v. Westchester County Legislature et al

While the Democratic majority and Republican minority caucuses of the Westchester County Legislature have engaged in extensive negotiation regarding representation by the County Attorney in this action given the inherent conflict between the two sides, there is now an agreement in principle to resolve this challenge to the redistricting plan between the Plaintiffs, Defendants Nolan and Cunzio (both minority party legislators), County Defendants, and the Board of Elections.

Following extensive communication with the court, Republican legislators Cunzio and Nolan noted their intention not to pursue their motion to disqualify the County Attorney. However, they ask the court to enter an order declaring that they are entitled to their own representation in this case to be provided by the County. Cunzio and Nolan contend that at the time of the redistricting plan's adoption they noted its "defects and pernicious features" and voted against it. Because of this conflict and their need to obtain outside counsel, Cunzio and Nolan ask the court to require the County to pay

their attorney's fees. The County argues that under New York County Law § 501, Cunzio and Nolan are not entitled to representation at County expense.

CENSUS

Local Population Estimates Released

The U.S. Census Bureau released population estimates for sub-county localities last week. The new numbers show that several major cities are rebounding after pandemic-related population losses, including New York City. The city's population showed the greatest decline from 2021 to 2022, but the losses were less than the numbers of people lost between 2020 and 2021. During the 2021-2022 period, the city's population dropped by 123,104 persons while 281,646 left during 2020 to 2021 when an estimated 281,646 left. Overall, during the pandemic period, the Census Bureau estimates that New York City has lost 5.3% of its population.

Population increases and decreases have fluctuated in some parts of the state that may be due to the way housing is counted and how the Census Bureau makes its determinations. In addition, "group quarters" (senior centers, dormitories, prisons, etc.) as counted by the Census Bureau, may be the reason. According to Jan Vink, of Cornell University's Program on Applied Demographics "some municipalities might look erratic at first glance, but that is most likely caused by swings in Group Quarters population. Nursing homes, prisons, dormitories all saw big drops in the number of residents in 2020 and are now recovering to pre-pandemic levels. This can cause some high percentage changes as those GQ can be a large component in the local population."

Spreadsheets listing the estimated populations for 2022 (and changes since last year) for the state's towns, cities, and villages are attached.