11/16/21

Independent Redistricting Commission

Greetings members of the NY State Independent Redistricting Commission. My name is Irsa Weatherspoon, a lifelong resident of Crown Heights and living in Crown Heights North (CHN) for the last 26 years. I am the Chairperson of Community Board 8 and a Board Director of Crown Heights North Association. I thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

For too long we have witnessed the disfranchisement and division within the CHN community. CHN has been drawn and quartered. In the political landscape, we have 4 veins of representation that include 2 Congressional members, 2 State Senators, 2 City Council members and 4 Assembly members. This type of representation negatively impacts our ability to be seen and valued as a community that is ripe with similar cultural, historical, educational and recreational interests.

We are a working class community who have made our investment in this community to live a fruitful and aspirational life. We want to be able to receive services as well as have our needs met through adequate and fair representation of our elected officials.

It is essential that CHN stays intact. We are seeking to acutely narrow the divide, so we can be the main thought and not the after thought, in receipt of what is leftover. This can be achieved by redrawing the lines of CHN for a more sustained and precise representation that would reinforce our shared community values and interests.

The proposed Unity Map #30 closely resembles what can can and should be achievable in addressing this divide for CHN. It is recommended that the southern border be extended to include the southern side of Sterling Place to St John’s Avenue and extend to Kingston Ave and for the north and south side of Lincoln Place going east towards Buffalo Avenue in the Unity #30 map.

I am requesting that the CHN footprint be redrawn to make us whole, so we may be afforded the full breadth of services and opportunities that only fair and adequate representation can provide.

Thank you Commission for your time and consideration.

Irsa Weatherspoon