New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Public Testimony:

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My name is Paul Devlin. I live on West 45th Street in Hell’s Kitchen in the 75th Assembly District. I’m the Democratic Party District Leader from Assembly District 75 Part B endorsed by the Hell’s Kitchen Democratic Club; and, I’m a member of Manhattan Community Board 4, serving as Co-Chair of the Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen Land Use Committee. I’m here to speak again on the importance of a cohesive Assembly district to bolster our neighborhood’s representation.

Hell’s Kitchen, which you also hear described by its technical name Clinton, is bound by 8th Avenue to the east going west to the Hudson River, then W 34th Street to the south up to W 59th Street to the north. It is just north of Chelsea and these two neighborhoods comprise the majority of Community District 4.

My neighbors and I have testified many times during these redistricting meetings asking that you keep Hell’s Kitchen whole. The population growth in Hell’s Kitchen has been predominantly amongst minority groups which makes our neighborhood a minority-majority area and a community of interest.

We have urged you to consider the Community District boundaries as better guidelines for drawing your maps.

You have also heard us speak of the north/south axis of Manhattan. Our neighborhoods are more connected as we move north and south rather than east to west.

I want to commend and thank you for hearing our concerns in the latest iteration of the proposed map. The current proposal has certainly made the 75th Assembly District a much more cohesive district with new proposed lines, but you have missed a few important issues by having the northern boundary cross at 53rd Street when it would make more sense to cross closer to 59th Street, our neighborhood and Community Board northern edge.

Of particular note is that the De Witt Clinton Park bound at the north by W 54th Street, which shares the namesake of our neighborhood, is not in the 75th Assembly District and removed from the Clinton Neighborhood. And, Hudson River Park, which is technically bound at the north by Pier 96 which is at W 58th Street, is a State treasure enjoyed by all of us and should be contained within the same State legislative boundary.

At the same time, your current proposal has a collection of blocks east of 5th Avenue incorporating Madison Square Park and Union Square Park, two major parks that make up the fabric of the East Side, as part of this West Side district.

To be specific in a recommendation rather than just pointing out flaws, I’d like to request that you take the blocks in the southeast corner of the proposed 75th Assembly District and add that population count to the northern part of Hell’s Kitchen. The northern borders seemed to have moved south due to population growth patterns, but I’d ask that you revisit the northern border of the 75th Assembly District and move the northern edge of the 73rd or to cause the rippling effect of impacts to nudge the border of the 75th slightly north.

Specifically, I would ask that you draw the **southeast corner line of the 75th AD down 5th Avenue from 26th Street south to 14th Street**. That could put the blocks between Irving Place and 5th Avenue into the 73rd District which runs up the East Side. I would ask that you draw the **northern line of the 75th Assembly District from 8th Avenue west across 60th Street to Columbus Avenue, then south down Columbus Ave to 59th Street, then west to 10th Avenue, then south along 10th Ave to 54th Street, then west along 54th Street to the Hudson River.** This boundary would respect current Election District lines on both corners of the current 75th Assembly District, plus keep institutions like Parc Vendome, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, and DeWitt Clinton Park all within Hell’s Kitchen.

I understand that each movement of blocks has impacts on neighboring districts, and I’m offering a pattern that could potentially work. I’d point out that if you move the 75th Assembly District line north, you would have to move the lines for the 67th North, then continue that pattern around Central Park nudging District 69, then 70, then 68, until you’re back around to the northern edge of the 73rd which connects to the southern border of the 75th.

Thank you for all the work you are doing.