

**To: New York State Independent Redistricting Committee**

**Re: Proposed Changes to 50th New York State Assembly District Map (Brooklyn)**

**Date: 2/13/23**

My name is Karrie Witkin. I've been a resident of Greenpoint for 15 years and currently live in the southeastern portion of the neighborhood. I am strongly against the proposed revision of the 50th District Map, which cuts Greenpoint in half and reassigns my New York State Assembly representation to District 38. I am in favor of keeping the current 50th District Map.

Admittedly, I have never been to Glendale, Woodhaven, or Ozone Park. But I cross McGuinness Blvd—the newly proposed district border—to the west side of Greenpoint every day.

Greenpoint is defined by distinct borders: the East river, Newtown Creek, and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. By the end of February this year, I will have attended information sessions for initiatives directly connected to the future of this surrounding infrastructure: a BQE visioning session, a town hall regarding the Army Corps of Engineers flood remediation proposal for the East River and Newtown Creek, and a Q&A with the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the Meeker Avenue Plume Superfund Site, which I happen to live within.

In an electoral landscape where district maps are weirdly and arbitrarily shaped, it means so much to me that the 50th District of New York State Assembly actually represents my community and its significant concerns holistically. Please leave it as is.

I'm also an advocate for Make McGuinness Safe, a campaign to transform McGuinness Blvd from a multi-lane Moses-era thoroughway into a safe local street. It hits very hard that McGuinness Blvd was chosen by the Redistricting Committee as the proposed boundary for our district. McGuinness Blvd was widened in the 1950s to create a shortcut from the BQE to the Long Island Expressway and the Midtown Tunnel.

The boulevard served to connect highways, but it immediately proved to be a dangerous speedway, cleaving Greenpoint into two parts. My entry point into the Make McGuinness Safe campaign comes after several decades of advocacy within the community for piecemeal safety improvements to this street.

McGuinness Blvd is just one area of Greenpoint where generations of activists have made incremental and steady progress to remedy the sacrifice zones of the neighborhood. You've heard from several of these activists today.

I'm deeply concerned that this redistricting will hobble the collective power of the community and prove to be a giant setback just when large-scale solutions involving federal and state funding are being explored.

I also want to note that prior to the pandemic, I wasn't tuned into local politics or activism. I didn't know who my NY State Assembly member was. Working from home and being grounded in my neighborhood has given me the opportunity to see what is going on and how to get involved. If my side of Greenpoint was lumped into a Queens-dominated district, I'm not sure that I'd have found the voice that I'm using today.

Thank you for taking my feedback into account.

Karrie