



November 9, 2021

Greetings to Commissioners of the Independent Redistricting Commission of New York and thank you for allowing us to speak on behalf of the communities we represent.

I come today to speak on behalf of Kingsbridge Heights Community Center (KHCC) and the Latinx community at large in the Bronx. Have served the Bronx Community for around 50 years.

KHCC provides resources to empower Bronx residents from cradle to career to advance education and well-being for a vibrant community. We achieve this in an environment that fosters academic milestones, literacy, mental health support, nutrition, technology, and the arts.

The services we traditionally provide include early childhood, youth, adult and family, garden and nutrition and emergency case management services.

We are an organization that is in and serves the community meaning we are deeply dedicated to not only working on behalf of the community but being a part of it. Critical to the foundation of a settlement house like KHCC is to recognize that we reside and work within the community to build strong ties, to be responsive to community needs and to contribute to the educational and professional advancement of neighbors, staff and parents.

KHCC is a 75 percent female led organization, predominantly women of color with a great need for access to resources and opportunities, pay parity and other issues that deeply impact our workers, families and community.

I respectfully submit my testimony regarding concerns on the Bronx districts particularly NY State Senate Districts 33 and 34 which divide some of the wealthiest parts and less affluent areas of the Bronx which has an impact on how resources are distributed, and representation of and accountability to community members issues and needs.



### Proper Representation and Accountability

Unbalanced mapping and divisions between Senate districts creates a confusion among voters and which elected official(s) they can hold accountable. The effective role of government in residents' lives is to be transparent, responsible and accessible. Without these key aspects, the eligible voting population increases skepticism of the relevance of its elected bodies and diminishes our democracy.

We recommend reconsidering how districts are drawn particularly to address the needs of community members

### Resource Allocation

District 34 is drawn in a way to include many affluent areas where as District 33 is drawn in a manner that groups together a large number of less affluent areas creating an imbalance in resource allocation. Consolidating predominantly resourced communities inequitably leaves less to divide across an adjacent district that is predominantly under resourced. A district in scarcity diminishes our organization's and respective elected officials from our ability to provide critical resources that community members need to support advancement of neighborhoods.

Recommendation: Drawing both of these districts in a way that makes geographic sense and creates parity between both of these areas.

### General Notes:

Geographical inconsistencies: District 34 including Riverdale, Fieldston on West side as well as Pelham, City Island (north to south) along East side; District 36 sits between two halves of District 34; District 33 (Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Belmont, Claremont, Van Nest, Tremont) is wedged between District 34 and incorporates the greatest neighborhoods of environmental and economic injustice as well as poor health outcomes in the Borough. District 33 also endures jagged district edges and peninsulas that jut out into District 34, creating division



between accountability and harms community members. Creates a division between relationships and divided loyalties which creates gaps in services, resource allocation.

The proposed changes do not seem to address these most urgent issues. District 34 retains its biggest challenges to equity in the Borough. Moreover, the Kingsbridge area would not even be represented within the Bronx. Moving Kingsbridge Heights Community Center local State Senate seat to Manhattan would also reduce our ability to receive local services. This would overlap with the 13th Congressional seat allocation in which we have less local representation and would compete with Manhattan, which earns more attention and resources than the outer Boroughs. Moreover, this move would compound all of the aforementioned issues for Kingsbridge Heights Community Center.

Thank you once again to the Commissioners for taking time to listen. We strongly urge you to consider the impact redistricting will have on Latinx community in the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center and in the community. We worked tirelessly to help stabilize and rebuild the community throughout COVID-19 and we need representation and resources in order to gain ground on what we lost. We cannot do so swiftly without accessible, transparent, and resourced elected officials. Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret Della  
Chief Executive Officer