New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

New York County Hearing

Public Testimony:

Paul Devlin

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New York, NY 10036

My name is Paul Devlin. I live on West 45th Street in Hell’s Kitchen. To help with your requests to be specific, Hell’s Kitchen, which you also heard 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. Hell’s Kitchen has seen incredible population growth in the western areas of our neighborhood in the past decade due to a lot of new residential developments.

I’m the Democratic Party Male 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. I’m here to speak on the importance of cohesive Assembly and Senate districts to bolster our neighborhoods and our representation.

I testified in July on the unique aspects of each of the neighborhoods on the West Side and the qualities that make us good neighbors. And, I’ll repeat from others today that the separation between the West Side and East Side extends far beyond the short geographic distance.

You on the IRC seemed to have heard my neighbors and I when we testified in July by producing your two draft proposals, and there are benefits from both the “Names” proposal and the “Letters” proposal in addressing the issue of cohesiveness of our neighborhoods and this much discussed north/south axis.

As District Leader, my current Assembly District has me representing portions of Central Park West, approximately one third of Hell’s Kitchen then fingers its way all the way east to Kip’s Bay. This is despite the fact that my Democratic Club is comprised of Hell’s Kitchen residents. If someone lives just 6 streets north of me, or just west of the Avenue at the end of my block, they aren’t in my district. This simply doesn’t make sense that the local political activists fighting for our neighborhood are split between Assembly Districts.

The ”Letters” plan helps address this concern for the Assembly District and I urge you to adopt something close to this plan. The “Letters” plan for Assembly District closely aligns with the City Council boundaries, the Municipal Court boundaries, and the Community District boundaries. I know my Community Board has submitted testimony reinforcing the importance of having Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen consolidated within the same Assembly District.

To be very specific, there’s one adjustment I’d request to the “Letters” Assembly plan, and that is:

**Move the northern boundary of Assembly District 75 from the proposed northern edge of W 53rd and W 54th Streets slightly north to the south side of W 60th Street to capture the northern portion of Hell’s Kitchen to make the entire neighborhood part of the same District. To accomplish this, consideration might be made to moving the proposed eastern boundary from Broadway to 8th Avenue**.

Although my request to adopt the “Letters” plan accomplishes an Assembly district that is more closely aligned with my neighborhood, I’d be remiss if I didn’t urge you to follow the same neighborhood cohesiveness guidelines when it comes to the Senate District. In this case, the “Names” plan for the Senate District is a much preferred option. The “Names” plan for the Senate district keeps the Chelsea neighborhood whole, so I urge support for the ”Names” plan for the 27th State Senate boundaries.