Good evening New York State Independent Redistricting Commission,

My name is Lennin Reyes. I am a resident of the Morrisania section of the South Bronx. I have several concerns regarding the December 1, 2022 Assembly draft maps.

The first is in the northern part of The Bronx. The Assembly Districts covering that part of the borough (78, 80, 81, 82 and 83) are drawn more to protect incumbents as opposed to maximizing Voting Rights Act opportunities for distinct minority groups. In the case of the northeastern Bronx (to be placed in the proposed 80th, 81st, 82nd and 83rd AD’s), the African-American community is split between the four groups with only one of them, the 83rd, to be specifically drawn for this community. I believe the African American population in the northern Bronx is large enough to create two Assembly Districts that are over 50 percent black each.

The two black districts could be east and west of each other. The former, my proposed 82nd AD, would center around homeowner-heavy neighborhoods such as the Baychester valley and Pelham Gardens, and large housing developments of Edenwald and Co-op City. The latter, my proposed 83rd AD, would center around the No. 2 subway line, and run between Pelham Parkway North and the City Line. Along the way, the 83rd would pick up neighborhoods denser than the 82nd, such as Allerton, Williamsbridge and Wakefield. Joining them for population purposes, and to unite the 10470 zip code, would be the low-density Irish stronghold of Woodlawn.

Speaking of a district being over 50 percent in favor of a specific group, that brings me to my second concern, this time being Central Harlem. The 70th Assembly District, as proposed, violates the Voting Rights Act in that it is less than 50 percent black. Instead of placing the more diverse neighborhood of West Harlem into the 70th, I propose adding the heavily-black northern part of Harlem from the proposed 71st AD. The boundaries from the west and going clockwise would be as follows; Edgecombe Avenue and the Harlem River Drive Approach (Willie Mays Drive) to the west, the Harlem River to the north, 5th Avenue to the east, and West 142nd Street to the south. Not only would this allow the 70th AD to maximize its historically African American voting strength, but it would also allow the 71st AD to maximize the voting strength of Washington Heights’s Dominican and white communities in the process.

The relocation of all of Central Harlem into the 70th AD would allow for the creation of two majority-Hispanic Assembly districts, centering around the Dominican communities of West Harlem, Hamilton Heights, Washington Heights and Inwood. Like my concern about maximizing the black vote in the Northeastern Bronx, the same applies here. The 71st and 72nd AD’s could both be over 50 percent Hispanic each by making them north and south of each other as opposed to east and west, with the boundary being around West 174th Street.

Speaking of Dominicans, I’m glad that more of my neighborhood, the historically African-American enclave of Morrisania, is placed in the 79th AD, despite now having two incumbents, Chantel Jackson and Latoya Joyner, in the district. However, the 79th AD should not be going north of Crotona Park North, as population found there is much more distinct than points south, and it unnecessary splits East Tremont, a neighborhood with distinct issues and points of interest. Instead, the 79th AD should pick up more of the proposed 77th AD that’s located east of the Grand Concourse, further uniting Morrisania and both branches of BronxCare Hospital (the Concourse and Fulton Divisions). This would allow the 77th AD to go further north to pick up all of Morris Heights, a neighborhood with strong Dominican and African-American populations (the former thanks to its location across the Washington Bridge from Washington Heights). Then, the 86th AD could pick up the parts of East Tremont located north of Crotona Park North that are proposed for the 79th AD, thus uniting East Tremont.

All of my proposals are found in the link below. Thank you for reading this letter.

<https://davesredistricting.org/join/c5e6fd8e-3b6f-456b-9968-f292c627f4eb>