

Subject: Opposition to the State proposal for Redistricting Roosevelt Island
To: Members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Thank you for considering Roosevelt Island's needs when determining the redistricting map for New York State's Assembly. I strongly oppose the current proposal which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan's District 76 and places it in Queens District 36.

New York State's redistricting rules require:

Districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as possible.

1. Our Manhattan Island's contiguous territory is Manhattan, not Queens.
2. The proposed change to our district is sprawling, not compact.

The commission must take into account the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest.

1. Roosevelt Island is being severed from long established communities of interest. Our political subdivision is not being respected.
2. The City Charter of New York City recognizes Roosevelt Island as a Manhattan community.

The Constitution of New York State specifically provides two State legislators for each district, a Senator and an Assembly Member. Roosevelt Island, a Manhattan community, has a unique form of local governance. We are governed by an unelected, State appointed Public Benefit Corporation, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp (RIOC). All of our local services are administered by RIOC, not by New York City. The Board of Directors for RIOC is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor of NY. Because of this unique relationship with the State of NY, in which our residents do not have a voting voice in their local government, it is imperative that we, a Manhattan community, have the combined efforts of both of our Manhattan based representatives, working together on our behalf, to provide us with responsive and fair dealing by RIOC.

1. Roosevelt Island is located in the Borough of Manhattan. We are an isolated island situated in the middle of the East River. Our transportation links, used daily by our working population and school children, directly connect us to 63rd Street and 2nd Avenue, the next stop on the F train, and 60th Street and 2nd Avenue, a 3.5 minute ride by tram. Both stops are in District 76, our most contiguous point of connection point.
2. Many of our children go to public and private schools in Manhattan, not Queens. PS/IS 217, the only public school in our community, is only available on a limited basis to children through the 8th grade. Confirmed by the school's principal, Mandana Beckman, the school can only accommodate 33 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Therefore, the vast majority of our public, middle school children attend District 2 schools in Manhattan. The mandated DOE District 2 school, which has the highest volume of Roosevelt Island middle schoolers, is Robert S. Wagner Middle School, located in the 76th AD. In addition, PS/IS 217 can only accommodate 15 of our 3K children, and 36 PreK2 children. The majority of our early learners, who PS/IS 217 cannot accommodate, attend

DOE District 2 schools in the 76th AD. Our District 76 Assembly Members have all had long, established relationships with schools in our required school district. We need to retain this invaluable Manhattan “community of interest.”

3. Since our inception almost 50 years ago, Roosevelt Islanders have established enduring relationships with many Manhattan based communities of interest. Due to our proximity to the United Nations, we have a large immigrant and non-resident population who retain close ties with the United Nations. We have many UN officials, UN staff, and their families living in our community. The housing quarters for the staff of Cornell Weill Hospital, in District 76, are located on Roosevelt Island. Also, a significant portion of our population work at other nearby Manhattan hospitals in District 76. Many of our residents are actively engaged with religious institutions in Manhattan. Most of our working population commute to Manhattan for employment every workday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justine Feron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Justine Feron

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