

Testimony to the IRC re 44th and 52nd Assembly Districts

My name is David Pechefsky and I have lived in the northern part of Park Slope with my wife and children for over 24 years. My mother-in-law who is in her eighties also lives a few blocks north of us, while my sister and her husband live off of Grand Army Plaza near the library.

The IRC's current proposal fixes the strange situation created by the 2022 lines where the 44th Assembly District has most of Park Slope but then "jumps" over where I live to include a part of Prospect Heights. When I've spoken to people from Prospect Heights now in the 44th AD they find it very odd that they are currently included in a district that includes Windsor Terrace and Kensington but cut off from their neighbors in the rest of Prospect Heights. I find it equally odd to not share a district with most of my Park Slope neighbors.

In terms of keeping neighborhoods and "communities of interest" together, it certainly seems like all of Park Slope up until Flatbush and east of 4th avenue should be in the 44th.

There is also an argument that the North Slope, especially the area north of Union could be included in a district that has Prospect Heights (the 52nd or 57th ADs). Grand Army Plaza, Flatbush commercial activity, subway stations, and the impact of Barclay's stadium and associated development on neighborhood life are all things that this portion of the North Slope and Prospect Heights share.

To quote my sister Rebecca Pechefsky (with her permission) who as mentioned lives on Plaza St. East. "Plaza Street is a little bit tricky, but I would still say the dividing line between Park Slope and Prospect Heights is Flatbush. Prospect Heights is in some ways both connected to Crown Heights and Park Slope. My neighborhood definitely includes the area bounded by Flatbush, Atlantic and Vanderbilt and extends in the other direction at least to Washington Ave. It definitely does not include Windsor Terrace. I hardly ever go there."

While the carving up of Prospect Heights and Park Slope in the lines that now exist is problematic, a glaring problem with the IRC proposal is the part of Windsor Terrace and Kensington cut out of the 44th and included in the 51st AD across Greenwood cemetery.

In our flawed system - I believe we would be better served by multi-member districts and proportional representation - lines of course have to be drawn somewhere. There are boundaries - roads, parks, canals for example - that don't change while neighborhood demographics and character do change compounding the task of the IRC. I encourage you to take a good look at the Windsor Terrace/Kensington AD 44/51 issue and after correcting this to include everything on one side of the cemetery together see what works best regarding the North Slope/Prospect Heights.

Thank you for your work.