

The United Communities Alliance for Fair Redistricting
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2/12/23

To all members of the IRC:

(1) Thank you for the consensus AD Map 24/AL (Attached). In configuring this consensus map in accordance with the principles of redistricting, fairness and equity, you deserve our thanks and commendations. Special thanks to Mr. Charles Nesbitt, Senator Jack Martins, Mr. David Imamura, Mr. Ross Brady, Dr. Molina, Ms. Elaine Fraser, Mr. Conway, Mr. John Flateau, and all of you for your leadership. In a wider context, your work is refreshing and transformative.

We respectfully ask that you again approve this map, and help pass it into law. 30 years of advocacy is finally being listened to. Chairman Ken Jenkins, why change a good thing? Religious doctrine is instructive, see 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Hold fast what is good." Even as we speak, current legislators are seeking to undermine this democratic process to preserve their monarchies around their homes, whining that their homes are no longer in the districts they represent, the will of the people be damned, shamelessly dictating who they want to represent, instead of voters choosing who will represent them.

The future of our families and democracy, and overcoming decades of gerrymandering, cronyism and special interests' stranglehold, lies in your hands. It is impossible to hold 7 elected officials accountable, who are all evading us, and consider us filler, apartheid style. No elected official lives in the fairly configured AD 24, having long abandoned us here! We have been reduced to a district of orphans and step-children, with no public office to seek help.

We are all Americans, although we were undercounted at the census, united in the concept that "we are all created equal and that there shall be no taxation without representation." The undercount was due to deportation fears, distrust

and disgust, and misclassification as Indo-Caribbeans, South Asian, West Indian, Asian Pacific, Other, N/A. In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough's overall 7.8% population growth. American Guyanese, which comprises the largest group, is the 2nd largest group in Queens, and the 5th largest group in NYC, yet they are the only group left out of any form of government.

<https://www.guyanatimesinternational.com/guyanese-listed-as-second-largest-immigrant-group-in-queens/>

The fact that this is the final product of a bipartisan effort makes AD 24 Map even more inviolate and compelling, and must be seen as a model of how Commissions should work around our nation for the greater good! We have submitted the data, statistics and evidence which justifies your decision, compellingly, for your consideration in the record of these proceedings, unless it was not returned from the Court which ordered these proceedings.

- (2) The cancer of gerrymandering and *status quo* have been disastrous for us. We have no senior centers, food pantries, homeless shelters, public offices to serve us to get unemployment insurance, public benefits, access better federal, city and state services like sanitation, foreclosure relief, small business help, our kids have trailer parks for classrooms and are frequently threatened with closure, we could not even bury our dead during COVID-19, we had the highest rates, our corpses stored in trucks with ice, before being dumped at Potter's Field in Hart's Island, we are dumped from hospital beds, we get no jobs from Resorts World and JFK Airport-economic engines in our own backyard.

https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/covid-rates-soaring-in-south-queens/article_ce446f19-f242-5095-a7a1-5b3a321eba21.html

No immigrant services, community centers, sports facilities, increased job training and health clinics. No bread-and-butter services. Resorts World wiped out hundreds of small businesses at the Flea market that provided affordable, essential items for decades. This cycle of poverty and deprivation will continue apartheid style unless you intervene. It is time you end this disgrace to humanity! The NY Times and an overwhelming number of media and researchers have exposed this systemic and institutional marginalization.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/10/nyregion/redistricting-queens-asians-nyc.html>

(3) We just need a fair chance to be elected. I am living testimony of that. I received 49.5 % of the votes in 2006 for a State Senate seat, and was initially declared the new State Senator, only to be reversed the next day to “narrow defeat,” because of the way we have been marginalized, exploited and vilified. I also became the only person to be elected District Leader in 2 different Assembly districts, AD 38 (2008), and AD 24 (2022)-which comprise this current district. Another Guyanese-American/Indo-Caribbean/South Asian, Richard David, was elected in the adjoining district of AD 31, which irrefutably proves that we should have a combined Assembly district, encompassing these neighborhoods. Republican candidates have also done well here, which makes this a truly bipartisan district.

The State Senate Majority leader, Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, was first elected to the NYS Senate that same year, and has now advanced to the highest levels of power, which only confirms how much we have been left back as a community! When Democrats re-captured the State Senate majority in 2008 for the first time since 1965, they gleefully acknowledged our community’s pivotal role in that effort, but then dumped us under the bus, and into the wilderness! The so-called Big Tent certainly had no place for us.

(4) Incumbent politicians and special interests have been boasting that they will reverse your good work, and continue to slice and dice us to preserve the status quo! However, the Courts have thrown out their self-serving maps, drawn in the backrooms of Albany, deceitfully. Let the word go forth that we will defend your historic work in drawing a map to unite us, and will expose this evil gerrymandering and self-serving attempts to continue to slice and dice us. Beware of these maneuvers in Albany! These rogue interests will be guilty of flagrant contempt of the Court’s order to go back to this drawing board to stop the evil gerrymandering they manipulated! We hereby put them ALL on notice!

(5) You will be made the scapegoats and publicly shamed if you fail to agree on 1 set of maps, especially since you will have betrayed over 20 million New Yorkers, including hundreds who attended your hearings all over the length and breadth of New York State, and braved and risked the pandemic, and \$4 million of our tax dollars will have been wantonly wasted.

This cannot end well for you, the IRC, nor self-serving incumbents. And it should not! The public has been made aware of the blame game following your failure to agree. Don't be duped by the corrupt interests who have failed us for decades, but want to come out unscathed, smelling like roses!

- (6) There is overwhelming evidence from the countless religious, business and community leaders and organizations, who have **ALL** testified to keep South Ozone Park, Ozone Park and Richmond Hill as one community of Interest as the Redistricting Draft "AL Map" (Assembly District) confirms. Attached.

**PLEASE KEEP THIS ASSEMBLY DISTRICT INTACT
ACCORDINGLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR MANDATE, OATH
AND DUTY.**

Chris Gounden

**Chris Gounden
Chairman**