To the Members of the Commission

My name is Yeruchim Silber and I serve as Director of Government Relations for Agudath Israel of America, a national advocacy group serving the orthodox Jewish community. I have also been a resident of Kensington and specifically the 44th Assembly District for over 30 years. For the last 17 years I have also been a member of Community Board 12, where I serve as second vice chair.

For all the years I have resided in this neighborhood both Kensington and Windsor Terrace have been integral parts of the district. The natural boundary of the district on the west has always been Greenwood Cemetery. Therefore, I was quite dismayed to see that commissions’ proposed map moves that boundary to the Prospect Expressway. The effect of moving the boundary will result in the splitting of both the Windsor Terrace and Kensington neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the portions of Windsor Terrace proposed to be removed from the 44th will be placed in the 51st AD. That is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, the 51st is comprised of Sunset Park, Red Hook and Dyker Heights, neighborhoods that have not traditionally been in the same AD and are different communities of interests. In addition, the large area of Greenwood Cemetery would effectively cut that portion off from the rest of the district thus leaving the residents of Western Windsor Terrace underserved.

In the Kensington portion of the proposed district, the western boundary is again moved from Fort Hamilton Parkway to Dahill Road which also serves to remove people that have long been a part of this district. It also serves to split the growing orthodox Jewish population of Kensington this diluting their interest.

As a result of these proposed changes, that places portions of both Windsor Terrace and Kensington into different Assembly Districts, both impacted ADs would be less compact and contiguous. It would also divide two long established and discrete communities with common interests, demographics and a history of positive civic activism. Simply stated it is contrary to many of the bedrock principles which should guide fair redistricting and good government.

We ask that you make Greenwood Cemetery along 20th Street the western border of the 44th AD not the Prospect Expressway as in the draft plan, and Greenwood Cemetery along McDonald Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway out to 39th Street the Northern boundary between the 44th and 51st ADs. This is a shift of only a few blocks but makes complete sense geographically

Historically the entirety of the two discrete, cohesive and well defined neighborhoods of Kensington and Windsor Terrace have been in the same Assembly district. This is true since at least the reapportionment following the 1970 census.

Please keep Windsor Terrace and Kensington intact.

Thank you