Dawn M. Cardi

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Ladies and Gentlemen: Members of the Redistricting Commission:

I am shocked and horrified to see the manner in which our beloved communities of Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn Heights, and Park Slope have been gutted by political forces who have no understanding of the character and history of both of these communities. Since well before the turn of the century, Carroll Gardens and Park Slope was the home of the longshoremen who worked tirelessly on the docks and it has remained one of the most cohesive, friendly, communities with a voice that has expressed over the years the importance of our community involvement. I moved to Carroll Gardens in 1982, when it was sometimes called pioneering. I grew up in Park Slope before it was fashionable, as did my parents and their parents after arriving as immigrants.

I am one of the founders of the Third Street Block Association, a committed community group which continues to fight as a group with our neighbors in Carroll Gardens for the safety and health of the community. The Third Street Block Association has been a longtime supporter if the IND and the 52nd AD has been our community since I arrived in this district. JoAnn Simon, Joan Millman, Eileen Dugan and other were and remain our political leaders and our voice. They represent the 52nd AD and not this new district if you allow the redistricting to occur. The district line as newly proposed puts a dividing line right in the middle of our neighborhood. My own street 3rd Street will be separated from the remainder of the Carroll Gardens community. Our elected representatives will no longer be in our district. These are representatives who have worked diligently to keep our neighborhood a beautiful, healthy place for ALL people to live. I was one of the founders of the Cobble Hill Merchant Association in about 1983 when my husband opened his first business in Cobble Hill and of course it became the Cobble Hill Carroll Gardens Merchants who supported it. Again, the merchants in our community will be separated from our fellow and sister merchants and their unified voices will be silenced, if you approve of the redistricting of our community. A new generation of merchants have arrived and their community needs to remain cohesive and you do so when you identify with a community. The business community in Carroll Gardens and Park Slope share similar interests in policing, sanitation, parking, the environment than they do with Clinton Hill and Fort Greene. While Clinton Hill and Fort Greene are lovely communities, we share little with them on a local basis.

As a former member of the CB6 for a decade and a chair of numerous committees and subcommittees it was quite clear that Carroll Gardens as presently districted, Cobble Hill, Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill and Park Slope were a real community of similar interests. We fought for alternative transportation, more bike lanes, police protection, better schools, activities for the children, teenagers, families, singles whether they were new or old to our neighborhood. Our power resided in our voice and even if we disagreed, it was an intact community that you are seeking to tear apart.

However, all of the above reasons are critically important, nothing is more important right now than the attack on our **environment** with the proposal for Public Place and the Gowanus Canal remaining on as a superfund site. Look at the redistricted map that you created. The wedge cuts off the neighborhoods that are the closest to these sites. Fort Greene, Clinton hill and the rest are not even close to these cites, nor do these communities necessarily see this as an immediate danger to their lives because they have other issues more local to their neighborhoods. We have the fight of our life, our children and grandchildren’s lives happening right now, the fight to save our environment, the air we breathe, the bodies we wish to remain healthy and cancer free. This fight demands a strong, cohesive community which is what we have now. If you tear it apart our voices will be substantially weakened if not silenced.

Finally, we are not naïve to the world of politics and while I may be wrong, it feels ever so much like some politicians for their own gain would like the district destroyed so that they can have more power and dilute the power of the politicians we presently have. That is never a legitimate reason to divide a district that so wants to remain together. I hope that you hear our voices and I hope that you return to the original lines of the 52nd AD.