



YUDELKA TAPIA
Assemblymember 86th District
Bronx County

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January 31, 2023

Hostos Community College
500 Grand Concourse, The Bronx, NY 10451

Subject: Testimony before the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission

Good afternoon members of the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission.

My name is Yudelka Tapia, I am the Assemblywoman for the 86th Assembly District here in the Bronx. Prior to being elected to the Assembly in 2021, I served as an elected District Leader in the 86th Assembly District. I have been a resident and advocate of this community for over 30 years. I have raised my family here and this is all to say, I know the 86th district, its surrounding neighborhoods and the Bronx extremely well.

This is my third decade engaged in redistricting, and I have seen the population changes firsthand. The 86th Assembly District was drawn with the intent to comply with the Voting Rights Act and provide the Latino community the opportunity to elect another candidate of its choice to the NYS Assembly based on population growth following the 2000 Census. This opportunity allowed the Dominican community to elect its first Assembly representative from the Bronx and it has continued to do so. I was actively involved in that fight.

Today, I implore the Commission to leave the current lines of the 86th District intact. This district has demonstrated an ability to elect in 2022, it is compact, only differing slightly in compactness from what you have drawn, yet the changes are significant. You both decrease the Latino voting age population unnecessarily and further extend the district to the Southern Boulevard border. This move shifts the center of the district and adds additional vulnerable communities with different needs.

Further, you remove all of the areas north of Fordham from the district, including a long-time housing development, Bailey Houses, St. James Church, a faith-based institution and St. James Park, all with advocacy and community ties to the 86th. Moreover, you remove a large economic development project in the area north of Fordham known as Fordham Landing. This represents an economic engine for the 86th Assembly District and many years of organizing and advocacy for residents of Community Boards 5 & 7. All of these communities deserve to have a voice when negotiating jobs, housing affordability and green space. Keeping these residents together affords them a greater voice, at the ballot box, in the halls of Albany and in their daily struggle for greater quality of life. Lastly, I have seen other versions of the 86th District offered. The only plan that reflects these dynamics is the plan submitted by the Unity Coalition for District 86.

Sincerely

Assembly member Yudelka Tapia
New York State Assembly District 86