

SOUTH QUEENS REDISTRICTING COALITION

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February 10, 2023

**Unanimous Approval of NYS Independent Redistricting Commission's
proposed Assembly District for Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South
Ozone Park Makes Strides in Addressing Community Concerns**

With the release of proposed map "AL," attached, the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission demonstrated that they had heard the demands of the community to keep the longstanding, diverse and growing South Asian and Indo-Caribbean community in the neighborhoods of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park together.

We thank you for listening, evaluating and doing your job-fairly and equally. We have been denied a seat in government at all levels, and it is time to bring this discrimination and apartheid to a stop. Elected officials ignore us, and pander to others. It is most un-American!

The proposed Assembly map "AL," really reflects the will of the community, and is compact and contiguous, and respects natural boundaries. Moreover, it reflects the large population of first and second generation of minorities and immigrants who have rejuvenated and improved this community here in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park.

For the past 30 years, over 3 redistricting cycles, we have been asking to keep our neighborhoods together so we can have a true voice in government, and access resources for our community. However, our pleas were ignored, so this is a landmark development for this community of interests. This is a great map, and we feel that our voices are being heard, as they should.

Another veteran community advocate and labor activist, Real Estate Broker Paul Persaud, of the Guyana American Business Group, has said, "We look forward to engaging this process to implement map AL that really reflect our neighborhood identity. We are grateful that our advocacy was heard at the Assembly level, particularly on behalf of the essential workers who abound in our community here."

Garth Marchant of the South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill and Ozone Park United for Justice and Empowerment organization was also encouraged by the progress made. "We will continue to fight to keep these Assembly lines, to keep these minority communities of color whole."

Mike Persaud, a teacher who has taught children in the district's schools since the 1980s, summed it up succinctly. "Our kids, and succeeding generations, will now get the educational funding they deserve to achieve a better life. Our businesses will get the help they need to survive. Our families will get the medical help they need. We can now achieve and preserve the American Dream in all respects."

Sonny Ali, a restaurateur and businessman who runs a chain of roti shops, was grateful that his community of Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park is finally being recognized. The City renamed Richmond Hill "Little Guyana" and "Punjab Avenue," and it is only fitting that the State draw us a district we can relate to, continue to build, and prosper. The American dream must be attainable for everyone, and we pay a lot of taxes here, and contribute to the City, State and Federal levels. All we are asking for is to be treated fairly, and equally, with other groups.

The South Queens Redistricting Coalition is a group of community residents, organizers and organizations formed to correct the gerrymandering of the Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park neighborhoods of Queens. This area is diverse and reflects the full range of the South Asian diaspora as well as a vibrant Latino community. The South Asian community is anchored by significant Indo-Caribbean, Indian, Punjabi and Bengali populations. These communities contribute indelibly to the significant growth of the Asian American population in Queens, NYS and in the broader USA, and stands in unity with the Pan-Asian community in asking for a greater voice in representative government.

Lucia Diaz

Good evening everyone, my name is Lucia Diaz and I am a member of Make The Road NY. I live in Corona, Queens, Assembly District 39. I have been a member of Make The Road for a long time and I am very pleased to see how my assembly member Catalina Cruz works very closely with my organization. It is certain that we have always needed more representation. I'm happy to finally see someone in the Assembly that identifies with me. A hard working woman and of immigrant background and someone who speaks my native language. We need to keep pushing to see more women in power and keep this representation that has not been easy to finally see in our community. The current Assembly map allows us to do that in Western Queens, where we now have six districts represented by six assembly members of color, with three of them being Latino. Your proposed map would undo that progress—by preventing us from electing three Latinos in the area—and it should be rejected. It also does not make sense to have one of the districts connected to Manhattan, which is a very different community and would reduce representation for Queens. I ask you to fix it and go back to the current Assembly map, which has allowed us to make progress for representation in our communities in Western Queens. Thank you.

* Advocating for 2022 districts
30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39.

Dora Azcanio

Hello everyone my name is Dora Azcanio and I live in Jackson Heights. I testify as a long-time Queens resident and mother, I am a member of Make The Road NY. I have been living in this country many, many years and I have seen the changes in our neighborhoods. It has been very challenging for our communities to be able to elect candidates of our choice and that can actually make our voices heard. But in recent years we have finally made progress to be truly represented. I personally have been very grateful to my current Assembly member, Jessica Gonzalez Rojas. I finally see someone who actually identifies with me and my immigrant background and how supportive my Jessica has been. I have witnessed her very hard and very closely with our community. She is a champion to the community of Jackson Heights and a great example of how, when we are able to elect candidates of our choice, we are better represented.

The map you've proposed, however, would put representation at risk for Latino communities in Western Queens. We would likely lose a Latino representative in the Assembly, and that would hurt our communities. It also does not make sense to have one of the districts connected to Manhattan, which is a very different community and would reduce representation for Queens. I do not think your proposal for Western Queens is a good one. Instead, I call on you to go back to the district lines passed last year for this region. Thank you.

~~A~~ Advocating to keep 2022 districts
20, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39

Manuel Ordonez

Good evening everyone, my name is Manuel Ordonez and I live right here in Queens. I am a member of Make The Road NY and I would like to share that as many of us here today know, the current Assembly map in this region has been effective for ensuring representation. Representation, that is what many of us residents of Queens need. Our immigrant and latino communities have been historically under-represented in state government.

But thanks to Make The Road NY, I have been part of organizing to help register, educate and mobilize members of our communities to participate in the political process. In Western Queens, with the current Assembly maps, we have finally elected six elected officials of color to represent the six central districts in our neighborhoods. But now, the new proposed map would make that virtually impossible to maintain. The Latino community in particular would likely lose ground, even though our population has grown a lot since the last census. So please, I ask that the IRC fix its plan by going back to the district lines passed last year for this region. Thank you.

- Advocating for 2022 districts
30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39.

Sofia Rivera

Good evening everyone, my name is Sofia Rivera and I have been living in Corona Queens for over 18 years now. I am a member of Make The Road NY. I am glad to testify that the current Assembly map in this region has been effective in ensuring representation. As a mother, I know how important it is to watch my children grow in an immigrant, Latino community with representatives they can identify with and look up to. One of my children is a current DACA recipient and I know he can feel seen and heard by someone like Catalina Cruz, who is a former Dreamer herself. This means a lot to me, my family, and my entire community. To finally have someone like our assembly member that looks like me, speaks my native language, and also comes from an immigrant background. I ask that we please keep our current assembly members. Thank you.

— For the record, advocating to keep 2022
districts 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39

Fausto Jimenez

Good evening everyone, my name is Fausto Jimenez, I have been a Queens resident for many years. I am a member of Make The Road NY and I live in Jackson Heights. In the many years living here Queens, NY I have seen the great changes that have occurred to help our communities have more representation. Because it wasn't always like that.

For many years our community has had the many challenges to elect a candidate of our choice. I have been part of the years of organizing and fighting to make the changes so we could see representation on the ballot box. In the current Assembly map, we finally have the representation we need, and Latinos and immigrant communities can be heard. The proposed IRC map would take us backward to less representation. I do not support your proposed map for Western Queens and urge you to go back to the current Assembly map for our neighborhoods. Thank you.

- For the record, advocating for 2022 districts 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39.

Michaela Toledano

Good evening, my name is Micaela Toledano. I am a member of Make The Road NY and I live in Corona, Queens, Assembly District 39. I want to share with you some of my personal experiences. I have been dealing with health issues and I know how hard it is to live with little to no healthcare. But I feel very happy and pleased that representatives like Catalina Cruz and Jessica Rojas Gonzalez are always there pushing for better healthcare. I have been living in this country for a long time and have never seen representatives like Catalina and Jessica join the Latinx community. They sit by me and my community members and actually listen to the community's issues. They are always interested and willing to help the members at MRNY. Assembly members Catalina and Jessica are champions in our community and I ask that the IRC revert to the district lines passed last year for this region to make sure that the Latino community in Western Queens does not lose representation. Thank you.

~~Advocating to keep 2022 districts~~
30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39

Ruth Lopez Martinez

Good evening everyone, my name is Ruth Lopez Martinez. I am a longtime resident of Queens and a member of Make The Road NY. I am here today to share that I have been in the process of organizing and helping register, educate, and mobilize members of our communities to participate in the political process. We have worked so hard to get our neighbors involved in the process to be counted and decide who should represent them. And now all of that hard work is being jeopardized with the IRC's proposal for Western Queens. Under the current Assembly map, we were able to see our assembly members get elected by the people of the immigrant and Latino community, three of six districts in our neighborhoods represented by Latinos. Your proposal would likely lead us to lose some of that representation. The Latino population in Queens has increased a lot since the last census. If anything, we should get more representation, not less. Please, I ask that we please keep our current assembly districts for Western Queens.

Thank you.

~~Advocating to keep 2022 districts~~
30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Assembly redistricting maps. My name is Perla Silva and I testify as Make The Road's Civic Engagement Coordinator. MRNY operates community centers in Jackson Heights, Queens; Brentwood, Long Island; Bushwick, Brooklyn; Port Richmond, Staten Island; and White Plains, Westchester. Our 25,000 members build the power of our communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services.

We have worked for 25 years to increase the voice of and representation for immigrant communities and communities of color across Queens and other areas of our state. One of the areas where we have done the most work has been in Western Queens. Most of our Queens membership lives in Western Queens.

I am here today to share our community members' concern about the IRC's Assembly map proposal for Western Queens, which we believe will reduce representation for immigrant and Latine communities—and communities of color more broadly—in the region.

I have had the privilege to work very closely with our members to successfully help our communities register, educate, and mobilize other members of our communities to participate in the political process—both in campaigns to win public policies, in the census process (for which we conducted outreach to tens of thousands of Queens residents), and in advance of elections. We have taken major strides forward—following the census and with the current Assembly map passed last year, we are finally in a position where the six primary Assembly districts in the area (30, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 39) are represented by people of color, several of which come from diverse immigrant backgrounds. Of these six, three of them are Latine. This is a huge victory for the members of MRNY as they have participated in helping our communities express their voice and help make this possible.

The IRC proposal would make that level of representation virtually impossible to maintain. We are particularly concerned that the Latine community would lose ground. For the communities we represent, the districts as they are currently constituted would be far better for maintaining the current level of representation, rather than finding it reduced.

It is also nonsensical to include Manhattan in a Queens district (the Long Island City district), effectively reducing the representation in Western Queens.

We therefore urge the IRC to revise the map for Western Queens and revert to the district lines passed last year for this region.

*Advocating to keep 2022 districts
30, 34, 35, and 36, 37, 39

Carmen Garcia

Good evening everyone, my name is Carmen Garcia. I am here to testify as a long-time Queens resident and as a mother of two sons.

I am a Community Health Worker Supervisor in the health department team at Make the Road New York. I have been working with Make The Road for almost 10 years. I am an immigrant from Ecuador and I have been living in Queens, New York for over 20 years.

When my family and I first moved here, we had a hard time finding affordable and dignified housing. My husband, my 5yr old son, and I rented a small room in an apartment that we shared with another family. Every day in my work as a Community Health Worker I met with many families going through this same situation due to the shortage of affordable and safe housing.

Overcoming the language barrier was challenging. This was very important for me because I needed to advocate for my children's education and their health. My team and I work for immigrant communities and communities of color across Queens and we have done most of our work in Western Queens. We know how important it is for people in our community to access many programs and services in their native language.

We as a nonprofit organization know the importance of representation and as we advocate for that representation, we are pleased to work alongside our current assembly members that also come to our organization and support our members. Our current assembly members have been there for the community of MRNY since they took the oath of office.

The new map proposed by IRC would make that virtually impossible to maintain—and the Latino community in particular would lose representation, even though our population has grown in the last decade. It also does not make sense to have one of the districts connected to Manhattan, which is a very different community and would reduce representation for Queens. We, therefore, urge the IRC to revise the map for Western Queens and revert to the district lines passed last year for this region. Thank you for your time.

* According to key 2022 districts
30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39

**PLEASE KEEP ASSEMBLY MAP "AL" ATTACHED WHICH
UNITES RICHMOND HILL, OZONE PARK & SOUTH OZONE
PARK AS A COMMUNITY OF INTEREST**

**Map "AL" complies with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice
and fairness**

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

I am Reena Prashad, a public-school teacher with extensive hands-on research and dedication to children and families in fragile communities of the City of New York. I have also taught the City's forgotten adolescent population located in the facility of Riker's Island correctional compound. Moreover, I have served on the New York State Education Department's student equity exam board in addition to the NYS teacher certification exam committee.

Children and adolescents are the faces of tomorrow. But, despite those fundamentals, the absence of our schools being united in a common school district in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, has caused them to exponentially lose out on a consensus curriculum of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), have access to common strategy, and greatly, the absence of teachers who both connect and understand the intricacy of heritage culture, their diversity, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, funding is being disseminated to other more prosperous communities that surround these communities, like Howard Beach and Glendale.

Thank you for agreeing on the bipartisan, consensus Assembly District for AD, Map "AL." This is historic! For the first time, these diverse communities with so much more in common that they are united more than divided, will have a seat at the table. Our pleas and voices were ignored at the City Council, State Senate and Congressional levels. However, with your grace, we can finally have a voice in the State Assembly.

Beyond the fact that both Republicans and Democrats on this Commission agree on this map, you will have done the correct and right thing by the people of this community and as the words of our 40th President, Ronald Reagan, who believed and practiced leadership amongst people, "The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things; he is the one who gets the people to do the greatest things." In light of this, this magnificent and unprecedented map

My name is Geeta Adhikari. I have lived in Queens for more than five years. I am 56 years old. I am a Social Worker.

I support the APA Voices revised map for AD30, Woodside Jackson Heights, and Elmhurst because it keeps our communities together and whole. Our community has elected Asians for the City Council and Assembly. Our district currently is majority Asian. And our revision helps keep our community institutions and residential areas whole. Our community in Woodside Elmhurst and Jackson Heights all rely on public transportation Hubs around the 7 lines including the 74th st Hub in Jackson heights and LIRR in Woodside on 61st.

We need an Assemblymember who understands such needs and priorities of immigrant communities and working-class people. This is why we need these revisions. So I'm here with many community members and organizations like mine, DRUM, to ask the commission to adopt the APA Voice proposals, not only for our district but across the city.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be heard.

Good Evening,

My name is Bimal Ghale. I have been living in Elmhurst for 9 years. I'm currently in the restaurant business. It has been my dream to establish an authentic Nepali restaurant in Jackson Heights.

I'm here to oppose the Independent Redistricting Commission's draft map for Woodside, Jackson Heights, and Elmhurst. This draft map divides the Jackson Heights Business District into two parts. (Agree with Farzana, state here where the Business District is located). Dividing the current business district apart serves no one. Instead, it divides our community apart. We can not accept it. We want to stay in one district so we can go to one office to speak to our representative to speak about our shared small business-related issues. This combined power gives our voices extra weight. In that light, we are currently forming a new merchant association in the district. (If the IRC draft map for AD 30 was adopted, then we would have to form two merchant associations for one business district). (This is ineffective, burdensome, and costly) . Small business owners in Jackson Heights already have so many issues to deal with, without this added bureaucracy. We don't need to add any more issues to our organizing efforts by dividing one business district into two assembly districts.

In light of these issues, I request that the IRC please revise the assembly district map. I urge you all to accept the map proposed by APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force that includes the Jackson Heights Business District.

Thank you.

Good evening,

My name is Bhawani Rai, owner of Sumnima Kitchen in Woodside. Due to the landlord's harassment, I had to close my restaurant, but I'm planning to open another one in Jackson Heights.

I'm here to testify in front of the Independent Redistricting Commission because it matters to me and my business. The IRC draft map divides the Jackson Heights' South Asian Business District into two parts. Dividing the current business is to divide our community apart. This is unacceptable. We want to stay in one district so we can go to one office to speak to our representative to speak about our shared small business-related issues. If the IRC draft map for AD 30 was adopted, then we would have to form two merchant associations for one business district. This is costly and ineffective. There are already so many issues in Jackson Heights. We don't need to add any more issues by dividing Jackson Heights into two assembly districts.

That's why I request that the IRC please revise the assembly district map. I urge you all to accept the map proposed by APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force that includes the Jackson Heights Business District. If we don't fix this issue now it will impact my business and my family for many years.

Thank you.

My name is ABDUL Mabud. I have lived in Hillside, Jamaica for more than five years. I am 32 years old. My occupation is Food Delivery.

I support the APA Voices proposal map for splitting Assembly District 26, We support creating a district that keeps the diverse south Asian ^{into 2} indo Caribbean and black communities in the hillside corridor in jamaica, glen oaks, and queens village together

We need an Assemblymember who understands such needs and priorities of immigrant communities and working-class people. This is why we need this proposal map. So I'm here with many community members and organizations like mine, DRUM, to ask the commission to adopt the APA Voice proposals, not only for our district but across the city.

Thank you for allowing me to be heard.

My name is KAMRUN NAHAR. I have lived in Hillside, Jamaica for more than 16 years. I am 46 years old. I work in a Home Health Aid Agency. I support the APA Voices proposal map for splitting Assembly District 26, ^{into 2} We support creating a district that keeps the diverse south Asian indo Caribbean and black communities in the hillside corridor in Jamaica, glen oaks, and Queens Village together

My two children, who were born and raised in this area, their friends, classmates, place of prayer is here. Whatever religion we belong to, we celebrate together. This is why we need this proposal map. So I'm here with many community members and organizations like mine, DRUM, to ask the commission to adopt the APA Voice proposals, not only for our district but across the city.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be heard.

My name is Mohammad Islam. I have lived in Hillside, Jamaica for over 10 years. I am 45 years old. I work in a restaurant. I support APA VOICE's proposed map to split Assembly District 26, ^{into 2} creating a district that brings together the South Asian, Indo-Caribbean and Black communities of Jamaica Glen Oaks, Queens Village and the Hillside Corridor.

The reason for the need of the proposed map is that people of the same community we live together and share our culture and heritage. For this the proposed map is required. That's why I'm here, along with many organizations like DRUM and community members, to urge the commission to adopt APA Voice's proposals, not just for our district, but citywide.

Thanks for giving me a chance.

My name is Lokmani Rai. I have lived in Queens for more than five years. I am 45 years old. My occupation is Taxi Driver.

I support the APA Voices revised map for AD30, Woodside Jackson Heights, and Elmhurst because it keeps our communities together and whole. Our community has elected Asians for the City Council and Assembly. Our district currently is majority Asian. And our revision helps keep our community institutions and residential areas whole. Our community in Woodside Elmhurst and Jackson Heights all rely on public transportation Hubs around the 7 lines including the 74th st Hub in Jackson heights and LIRR in Woodside on 61st.

We need an Assemblymember who understands such needs and priorities of immigrant communities and working-class people. This is why we need these revisions. So I'm here with many community members and organizations like mine, DRUM, to ask the commission to adopt the APA Voice proposals, not only for our district but across the city.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be heard.

मेरो नाम लोकमणि राई हो । म पाँच वर्षभन्दा बढी समयदेखि क्वीन्समा बसेको छु। म ४५ वर्षको भएँ। मेरो पेसा ट्याक्सी चालक हो।

म AD30, Woodside Jackson Heights, र Elmhurst को लागि APA Voices संशोधित नक्सालाई समर्थन गर्छु किनभने यसले हाम्रो समुदायहरूलाई एकै ठाउँमा राख्छ। हाम्रो समुदायले नगर परिषद् र सभाका लागि एशियालीहरूलाई चयन गरेको छ। हाम्रो जिल्ला अहिले बहुसंख्यक एसियाली छ। र हाम्रो संशोधनले हाम्रो सामुदायिक संस्था र आवासीय क्षेत्रहरूलाई पूर्ण रूपमा राख्न मद्दत गर्छ। वुडसाइड एल्महर्स्ट र ज्याक्सन हाइट्समा रहेको हाम्रो समुदाय ज्याक्सन हाइट्सको ७४ औं सेन्ट हब र ६१ मा वुडसाइडमा LIRR सहित ७ लाइनको वरिपरि सार्वजनिक यातायात हबहरूमा भर पर्छन्।

हामीलाई आप्रवासी समुदाय र श्रमिक वर्गका मानिसहरूको आवश्यकता र प्राथमिकताहरू बुझ्ने सभासद चाहिन्छ। यसैले हामीलाई यी संशोधनहरू चाहिन्छ। त्यसैले म यहाँ धेरै सामुदायिक सदस्यहरू र मेरा, DRUM जस्ता संस्थाहरूसँग आयोगलाई हाम्रो जिल्लाका लागि मात्र नभई सहरभरि एपीए भ्वाइस प्रस्तावहरू स्वीकार गर्न आग्रह गर्न आएको छु।

मलाई सुन्ने मौका दिनुभएकोमा धन्यवाद।



Darrel Ganesh Sukhdeo
Community Activist, Indo-Caribbean Expert & Resource
Private Chef, Caterer & Business Coach,
646.820.4641

February 15, 2023

Chairperson & Honorable members of the NYS Redistricting Commission,

Good afternoon. I am Darrel Ganesh Sukhdeo, a Community Activist representing South Queens and the South Asian and Asian voters. I speak on behalf of several organizations that have worked tirelessly to bring out the vote and register voters. By a conservative estimate we reach 200,000 residents of South Queens, particularly Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park.

We also reach over 500,000 South Asians in NYC. To name a few of the groups I work with include the Rajkumari Center, AALDEF, Sakhi for South Asian Women, the Indo-Caribbean Alliance, the RHEDC, The American Cancer Society-Eastern Division and National Cancer Action Network, The Asian American/Asian Research Institute of CUNY, the South Asian Journalists Association, South Queens Women's March, Jahajee Sisters, the United Communities Alliance, among many others. Don't take my word for it, reach out to them and they will confirm my many years of continuous service.

Since 1998 I have worked long and hard to bring out the vote and advocate for a single district for Richmond Hill/ South Ozone Park, along the way helping many politicians but despite a multitude of promises no effort has been made to help this community. We are being ignored. This will not stand. As a so-called "model minority" we earn more and pay more taxes than the average NYC household.

We have hired more employees across most industries in NYC and lead all employers in the tech sector. Yet we do not representatives, because of the legacy of dividing our vote and an agenda by many to disenfranchise our community. Are you, the members of this Commission, part of that legacy? It seems from your proposed map that you are not, there is hope and faith in you all, and we implore you to give us our 1st South Asian, Indo-Caribbean & Latino district!

PLEASE AGREE ON YOUR ATTACHED PROPOSED MAP AD 24, WHICH UNITES RICHMOND HILL, OZONE PARK & SOUTH OZONE PARK!

You will be making History and forever enshrined in the annals of New York State and City. YOUR DECISION TO APPROVE OUR MAP will be a historic, landmark event. Please do not perpetuate the habit of division and not so hidden policy of deliberate disenfranchisement!

There

Otherwise, THIS TIME we will be asking over 250,000 plus NYC residents NOT to give money to political parties and only give to South Asian and Asian candidates directly. Not to believe promises since they have all proven to be empty. And, to send a message that it's not okay to continue with this castigation by withholding all funding to political parties.

You have received our proposed maps, and particularly the new proposed district for Richmond Hill/South Ozone Park/Ozone Park, which at the very least would give us the opportunity to proffer a candidate for a seat in the NYS Legislature. Do not allow our so-called "elected officials" to draw their own districts.

We are a significant part of the fabric of NYC, not just a model minority of essential workers, but we also contribute heavily to civic engagement, political activism and policy, and continue to make massive impacts on NYC, and NY State.

It is more than past time we have fair district lines. I am calling on each of you to help us, do your sworn duties scrupulously, and fearlessly. Do what the Judge ordered you to do—come back to the drawing board, reject gerrymandering, and approve us in a united Assembly district!

This is about democracy, and not the self-serving politicians who take us for granted, and have abandoned our needs. COVID-19 has shown what terrible pain and suffering this causes, because we had the highest pandemic casualties here in South Queens!

It has been rumored that in the past money changed hands to us decided, this just what I heard. If that's a real option send an emissary to speak with me, I'll make it rain!

Thank you for coming to Queens.

Respectfully submitted.

Darrel Ganesh Sukhdeo
Darrel3000@gmail.com
646.820.4641

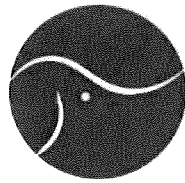
My name is Nesar Bhuyan. I have lived in Hillside, Jamaica for more than 9 years. I am 34yrs old. I am a community organizer at DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving). I support the APA Voice's proposal map for splitting Assembly District 26 into 2.

We support creating a district that keeps the diverse SA+IC+black communities in Hillside, Glen Oaks, and Queens Village TOGETHER.

Our communities have shared small businesses, religious institutions, schools, and public transportation for as long as I have been here. Keeping our communities together will allow us to continue building stronger relationships, support each other in needs. Our children will have diverse upbringing, small businesses will continue to prosper. We will be able to live as a diverse, united, and strong community. Our voices will be strong only if we are united.

If the Commission does not accept this proposed map, working-class, marginalized communities will have their voices silenced. How can we voice and advocate for our needs if we don't have a community? I am here with community members and community organizations like DRUM to ask the Commission to adapt the APA Voice proposal, not only for district but across the city. I am here to ask to do what is right for the communities that live here and want to continue to live together.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be heard. I hope it is not wasted.



chhaya

Community Development Corporation

**Chhaya CDC's Queens Redistricting Hearing Testimony
February 16, 2023**

Hello, My name is Urgen Sherpa. I am the Senior Small Business Organizer at Chhaya CDC, a member organization of the APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force and I am also a long-time resident and voter (redacted) in Jackson Heights.

CHHAYA is a 22-year-old community organization, serving South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities across Queens, including Elmhurst, Woodside, and Jackson Heights.

CHHAYA works to build housing stability, economic well-being, and the power of the community by providing a number of direct services which include tenant counseling and small business support. Over the last two decades, this community has been and continues to be severely underserved while facing some of the hardest housing and economic issues in New York City. This is especially true of small businesses.

While the pandemic exacerbated many of these issues, small business owners have been struggling for some time with unreasonably high rent, little to no commercial tenant rights, and harassment from landlords resulting in many small businesses barely hanging on or being forced to shut down.

In spite of the fact that more than one-third (35.1% as of 2021) of the small businesses in Queens are Asian-owned, Asian small businesses have been left behind when it comes to accessing any government aid and resources often due to the absence of language access and community engagement.

AD30 holds an important South Asian cultural and commercial corridor that has served the South Asian community in Jackson Heights, Woodside, and Elmhurst for decades. It is a critical corridor that is part of the cultural history and fabric of the neighborhood.

The IRC draft currently splits this essential corridor that in reality spans from 72nd street and 76th street which includes 37th avenue, 37th road, and Roosevelt avenue. 35th avenue between 72nd street and 70th Street. But if we are talking about where the vast majority of the small businesses are concentrated, then it is from 72nd street and 75th street which includes 37th avenue, 37th road, and Roosevelt avenue.

Additionally, the Tibetan Library and Cultural Center on 57th Street and ~~37th~~ 32nd avenue has been left out of AD30 in the IRC draft when it is a critical cultural institution and serves many in Jackson Heights, Woodside, and Elmhurst. We urge the commission to adopt the proposed map by APA Voice Redistricting Task Force to ensure that South Asian small businesses and cultural institutions in Jackson Heights are not fractured and are kept whole with the rest of the Asian communities in Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Woodside. Please give us an opportunity to gain representation and the ability to collectively advocate for ourselves.

Thank you

1,250 SIGNATURES RECEIVED

Petition to New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Esteemed members of the commission:

I humbly request that you keep my family members and neighbors in Assembly District 30 because the proposed 2023 map divides our community into four (4) Assembly Districts.

The South Asian communities from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Tibet share a similar culture. We live and shop in the Jackson Heights area, which is our home, and we want to stay together in one Assembly District (Assembly District 30).

Muslims are required to pray five times a day. Therefore, we have built several masjids in the Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and Woodside areas. The proposed map removes Abu Huraira Masjid, located on 80 Street between 30 and 31 Ave, Baitul Ateeq Masjid on 61 Street, between Northern Blvd and 32nd Ave, Hanfia Masjid on 57 Street, between Northern Blvd and 32 Ave, and Fatima Masjid at the corner of 58 Street and 37 Ave. It also removes Masjid Al Toufiq, located at the corner of Forley Street and Britton Ave. These masjids are connected geographically with the Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Woodside communities. They are vital to our daily lives, and we must remain together in Assembly District 30.

For your information, I have submitted a map for Assembly District 30 that will keep the communities together, keep the territory together, and be fair to all communities.

Sincerely yours,

Name	MOHAMMED RANA		
Address	1-50-50th AVE APT#604 LIC NY 11101		
Phone #	347-757-1633	Sign	Mohammed Rana

